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The Christology of Hegel

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Quentin Lauer, S. J., EDITOR

The Christology of Hegel

James Yerkes
Earlham School of Religion

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*For Ruth,
Susan, Kenneth and Janet*

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Preface

I must begin by confessing I now know first-hand what before I have only heard others observe. An author does indeed face something of a moral dilemma when invited to republish a book. Can one in good conscience reissue a book without revision when both one's own subsequent reflections on the material and the response of critics make it clear it could be improved? Yet that disturbing awareness is hardly new. Every scholarly writer knows the state of critical reflection in one's discipline is constantly changing and so in principle the moment after the type is set the work is already in need of revision. So, I concluded, the dilemma regarding republication turns out to be one of a class rather than one of a kind. Clearly, the issue could never be perfection, but only adequacy.

The question therefore which I faced was, does this work as it stands and as a whole remain a fundamentally sound approach for interpreting Hegel's philosophy of religion? I am convinced it does. As one approach among others, of course, it certainly does have distinguished dissenting peers, but not finally, I think, self-evidently superior lords. Stylistic shortcomings and a few argumentative lacunae notwithstanding, the basic analysis of Hegel's concepts remains sound. In this confident but not defiant spirit I set forth the book again, this time, happily, in the SUNY Series in Hegelian Studies. For this Series, however, two functional improvements have been made: the Bibliography has been updated and an Index has been added.

Next I want to acknowledge gratefully some of those persons whose assistance in this project has been indispensable on the way to publication. To begin with, a special word of gratitude must go to Langdon Gilkey, Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy. They deserve thanks not only for the intellectual stimulus which first generated my interest both in christology and in Hegel while I was a student at the University of Chicago, but also for their astute criticisms and warm personal support

as the project first developed under them there in dissertation form. In other contexts there and since Schubert Ogden has also deeply affected my thinking on christological issues, especially as they raise questions for philosophy of religion. His caring affirmation in several discouraging moments was no less important. The special bonds forged with these persons have held firm now for more than a decade.

Furthermore, beyond the personal debt too enormous to describe which I owe to my family for what they endured throughout the writing and editing process, I want especially to thank Daniel Snyder, who helped prepare the Index, and Lynn Peery, who gave freely of her secretarial skills. Lynn Clapham, my colleague, and former students James Amundsen, Patricia Jones, David Kahn and Deborah McGrady, all gave valiant help in the early stages of manuscript checking. In addition, at various intervals and in varied ways, administrative and faculty colleagues both at Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion came to my aid when I needed their expertise and institutional support.

Finally, William Eastman of SUNY Press, together with Charles Winquist of the American Academy of Religion and Conrad Cherry of Scholars Press, went to considerable editorial and managerial trouble to facilitate publication. They, along with Suellen Wenz, production editor, were patient, supportive and cooperative at every turn.

THE HEXAGONS
RICHMOND, IN
JAMES YERKES

Abbreviations

Citations which use these abbreviations will be characterized by the following form: when the quotations are reproduced from the English editions, the location in the German text will be given in parentheses following e.g., LPR 1:151 (VPR 11:146); when the translation is my own, the German text will be cited first and the location of the translation in the English edition will follow in parentheses e.g., VPR, 11:146 (LPR, 1:151). The English text abbreviations listed below are followed in each case in indented form by the German texts from which the translations, in whole or in part, have been made.

- ETW *Early Theological Writings*. Translated by T. M. Knox, with an Introduction and Fragments translated by Richard Kroner.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.
- HTJ *Hegel's theologische Jugendschriften*. Edited by Herman Nohl.
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907.
- GL *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Translated by W. A. Johnston and L. G. (Greater) Struthers, with an Introductory Preface by Viscount Haldane of Logic
Cloan. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1929.
- WL *Wissenschaft der Logik*. 4th ed. Vols. 4-5 in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke: Jubiläumsausgabe in zwanzig Bänden*. Edited by Hermann Glockner. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann, 192730. Hereafter abbreviated as *Sämtliche Werke*.

- HPM *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the "Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences"* (1830). Translated by William Wallace, together with the *Zusätze* in Boumann's Text (1845) translated by A. V. Miller, with a Foreword by J. N. Findlay. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- LL *The Logic of Hegel*. Translated from the *Encyclopaedia of the Lesser Philosophical Sciences* by William Wallace. 2nd edition, revised Logic) and augmented. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892.
- Enzy. *System der Philosophie*. Vols. 810 in *Sämtliche Werke*. [Vol. 8 is the German text for LL and vol. 10 is the German text for HPM].
- LHP *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Translated by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simpson. 3 vols. New York: Humanities Press, 1963.
- VGP *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*. Edited by Carl Ludwig Michelet. 2nd edition. Vols. 1315 in *G. W. F. Hegels Werke: Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten*, 18 vols. Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 18401848. Hereafter abbreviated as *Werke*.
- Ein. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*. Edited by Johannes Gesch. Hoffmeister. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1940.
- Phil.
- LPH *The Philosophy of History*. Translated and with a Preface by J. Sibree, together with another Preface by Karl Hegel. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.
- VPG *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*. 3rd edition. Vol. 11 in *Sämtliche Werke*.
- LPR *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Translated by E. B. Spiers and J. B. Sanderson. 3 vols. New York: Humanities Press, 1962

- VPR *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*. Edited by D. Philipp Marheinicke. Vols. 1112
- BR *Begriff der Religion*. Edited by Georg Lasson. Vol. 1, First Half-Volume, in *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*. 2 vols. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 19251930.
- Phen. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by J. B. Baillie. New York: Harper & Row, Torchbooks, 1967.
- Phän. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Edited by Johannes Hoffmeister. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952.
- PR *Philosophy of Right*. Translated and with Notes by T. M. Knox. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Recht *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. Vol. 7 in *Sämtliche Werke*.

Introduction

Philosophic thought, however rooted in existential commitments, craves a comprehensiveness which transcends them. 1

This essay is an attempt to demonstrate that Hegel's mature speculative philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit may best be understood as an explicit function of distinctly religious presuppositions which ultimately are rooted in his convictions about the decisive revelatory and redemptive importance of the Christ event in human history.² It is in connection with these presuppositions that I think it is proper to speak about Hegel's "christology," for christological interpretation in the theology of the Christian church has always revolved around the question of the universal religious significance of the historic Christ event. It is this question, and the speculative answer which Hegel assayed to put forth about it, that makes his thought for me a matter of theological interest.

Hegel, however, was not a theologian but a philosopher, and I will attempt to show that though he clearly recognized an inextricable relationship to exist between the two disciplines, he also nonetheless recognized the legitimate difference between them and did not confuse their cultural functions. But it also must be noted that since Hegel declared himself confessionally to be a Lutheran and therefore a member of the Christian community of faith^{3a} community whose historic witness involved the momentous religious truth claim that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Cor. 5:19) he clearly considered it personally as well

as methodologically necessary to show how his speculative philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit, as the "science" of universal truth, was compatible with the historic christological truth claims of the Christian religion. My interest in this essay, then, is to see how he went about doing this, to see by means of a thoroughly immanent analysis of

the textual articulation of his system what he understood to be the proper way to re-enact in the form of speculative thought the christological understanding of God and his relation to the world normatively implicit in the faith and witness of the Christian community.⁴

Why Hegel?

The justification for such a project being undertaken at the present time may be expressed in a two-fold manner. The first reason is extrinsic to Hegel's thought and the second intrinsic.

The first reason has to do with the fact that there is a veritable renaissance of interest in Hegel, both from a philosophical and a theological perspective. One obvious indication of this is that whereas from 1960 to 1964 the *Library of Congress Catalog* listed only thirty-seven new entries dealing with various aspects of Hegelian thought, and from 1965 to 1969 one hundred and eighty-two entries, the newest index from 1970 to 1974 lists a total of three hundred and nineteen entries!⁵ If one asks why there has been this sustained increment of interest in Hegel, one of the central reasons would seem to be that contemporary academic thinking has been deeply moved by the desire to discover a unified vision of the enduring transcendent meaning of human existence, a meaning that lies beyond the fragmented and parochial articulation of always merely tentative, wholly immanent and frequently conflicting "partial" meanings to be found in the various physical and human sciences. To borrow Fackenheim's phrase, there is a craving for a "comprehensive" way of viewing the *interrelation* of these sciences after a post-Enlightenment period when their mutual and otherwise legitimate *differences*, both in method and content, have been over-

stressed. It is the question whether in fact one may once again speak of universally warrantable truth (the uni-versus-alia) in terms of which the whole corporate human cultural project, past and present, may find a reference for rational judgments beyond our otherwise merely private and parochial expressions and commitments.

Philosophically speaking it is the renewal of the question of the possibility of doing metaphysics. Theologically speaking it is the renewal of the question of the possibility of speaking of "God" as a factor which grounds and illuminates the meaning of human existence. Culturally speaking it is at bottom the existential question of the possibility of hope. To borrow Kant's terms, it is the question about "what we may hope" in a time when the questions about "what we can know" and "what we

ought to do" need a larger, more comprehensive and integrated frame of reference than is presently available. Indeed, it is the haunting and anxious question as to whether or not the malaise of spirit which has gripped the Western World after two devastating world wars can be broken, can be transcended by a hope *in ourselves and beyond ourselves*. Hegel sought to answer this precise question in the crisis of self-confidence present in his day with such depth and power of insight into the human condition that many thinkers are therefore returning to him to see if he can offer us any help in coping with this same sort of cultural crisis in our day. The recent spate of texts written on his thought, together with the enormous energy going into re-editing and re-translating his works, indicate many apparently feel he can. This essay is an attempt to see if this is the case in terms of peculiarly theological questions, especially as these questions inevitably involve correlation with the philosophical enterprise itself.

Why Hegel's Christology?

The second reason this project has been undertaken is that in coming to grips with the intellectual and cultural crisis of his own day Hegel developed his system with a clear acknowledgment of the fact that it was in connection with the central symbols of the Christian witness of faith, and particularly that of the Incarnation, that he found inspiration for his philosophical task. I therefore decided to take Hegel at his word when he insisted that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation was the "speculative central point" [Mittelpunkt] 6 of his system and that the *Vorstellungen* connected with the Christ event were, in contrast to all religious *Vorstellungen* found in other traditions, "absolutely adequate"⁷ for

revealing the truth about God. I determined to explore in just what sense he understood this to be the case.

I am clearly not the first in our own day to try to pursue this issue, but what special contribution I think I can offer in contrast to others is to provide a textually immanent exploration of Hegel's christological convictions as they are variously articulated in the breadth of the mature system. This means that unlike Hans Küng,⁸ for example, I have paid little attention to questions about the external relation of Hegel's christological ideas to inherited church tradition or to his theological and philosophical contemporaries, and much more attention to the structural presentation of these ideas in terms of the system "as a whole," as a unified and systematic speculative enterprise. Hegel believed that such

a "system" should stand alone on its own merits as a conceptual enterprise, i.e., as judged by the criteria of internal coherence, width of intelligibility, and adequacy to lived experience. Hence, while it is clearly true that a knowledge of such external relations is indispensable for understanding how Hegel both owes a debt to and has made a debtor of the entire Western intellectual tradition, which is the real merit of Küng's approach,⁹ it seemed to me important to try to stay *within* the system to see how and if the internal structuring of all its forms was worked out consistently in terms of the stated christological premises. Since no one else has attempted this, it seemed the time was ripe to do so.

The first chapter, "Christology, Christianity and *Volksreligion*," could be considered an exception to this method, and in some ways it is clearly biographically developmental in its concerns. But my interest there is still primarily focused on the mature system, and the christological issues of the *Jugendschriften* are explored in relation to the final shape of his christology i.e., to show how there is a measure of continuity between his earlier and later views, even if also, as so many others have been intent on showing to the *exclusion* of such continuity, a measure of discontinuity.

This method of discussing Hegel's christology also accounts for two other characteristics of the present project. First of all, I have not attempted to provide a systematic critique or defense of Hegel's christological ideas. My central purpose was to try to understand him, not to try to refute or defend him. To be sure, I do attempt to defend him against what I consider to be erroneous readings and unjust criticisms of his system, taken on its own terms and given its own peculiar presuppositions, and I do venture observations about

some of the apparent difficulties of his system in terms of the three criteria mentioned above. But these brief discussions are generally restricted to footnotes and the conclusions of the chapters. My basic goal was to try to understand the "real" Hegel on his own terms.

I say the "real" Hegel because, given the fact that he has been the object of so *much* secondary interpretation over the years, it is sometimes difficult to believe such secondary interpreters are talking about the same man, be they "for" him or "against" him! When one currently reads the terms "Hegelians" or "Hegelianism" as short-hand reference to a way of thinking philosophically, one needs to take pause, for these references frequently are not really to what Hegel himself has said and meant about such a way of thinking, but to what he has been dominantly *taken* to have said and meant. It is an interesting question as to whether or not the ultimately decisive cultural significance of a thinker's impact

in the history of ideas lies so much in what *he* said and meant, or in what he has been dominantly *taken* to have said and meant.

Nonetheless, granting the obvious problem of textual hermeneutics in general when faced with the task of trying to be "true" to an author's original intentions, the only safe, and indeed morally responsible, recourse is to go back to the primary sources and try to see if the "dominant" interpretations are adequate.

I am convinced that Hegel has suffered from a large amount of interpretive distortion by both friend and foe and this because either the primary texts themselves have not even been consulted, or some of them have been consulted and interpreted in abstraction from the total systematic expression of his ideas. This holds true about his christological convictions. To get an adequate perspective on these convictions, for example, one clearly must not restrict oneself to the lectures on *Philosophy of Religion*. There are crucial christological texts in the *Phenomenology*, the *Encyclopaedia*, the *Philosophy of Right*, the lectures on the *History of Philosophy* and the *Philosophy of History* indeed, in almost every systematic expression of the mature Hegel's system. One of the important things I hope to do in this essay is to help correct some interpretations of Hegel's christology which have suffered from such a too-narrow approach.

Secondly, I have not tried to provide extensive consideration of the theological development of Hegel interpretation up to the present.
10 The closest I come to such a consideration is in the Conclusion where I briefly attempt to stand "above" his christology and to suggest how the way in which he sought to articulate his christological convictions in the light of the inadequate intellectual

presuppositions and cultural problems of his own day might be instructive for helping us meet similar inadequacies and problems as we attempt to articulate such convictions in our own. To try to do more would have taken me far beyond the scope of my primary interest in this essaynot to mention the fact that such a consideration requires rather more extensive historical expertise than I presently possess!

Having now made clear, I hope, the goal and central assumptions which will guide me in the development of this project, it is time to get on with the project itself. After all, Hegel had little patience with people who wrote long prefaces and introductions to treatises on philosophical questionsor for that matter, with those who having casually surveyed them, clothed comfortably in their "dressing gowns," think they are thereby relieved of the more onerous critical task of laboring through the argument itself!¹¹

Chapter 1

Christology, Christianity and *Volksreligion*: The *Jugendschriften* and the *Volkserzieher*

In the Kingdom of God the common element is that all are living in God. It is not the commonality of a concept, but love, a living bond which unites believers. It is this feeling of the unity of life in which all the contradictions characterized by hostilities . . . are annulled. 1

Life is the union of union and non-union. 2

The fact that the young Hegel maintained an ambivalent and acrimonious attitude toward the Christian religion as he found it represented to him in his student years has been amply discussed by others.³ We therefore need not dwell on that fact here in much detail. What will be helpful for our purpose is to note the reasons for this initial acrimonious ambivalence and the reasons for Hegel's gradual change of mind about Christianity as it begins to emerge in the *Jugendschriften*. Our basic purpose is to indicate how the earliest concerns of the intentionally unpublished *Jugendschriften* on religion are related developmentally to Hegel's christological conceptions articulated in his later system.

Though Kaufmann and others have bemoaned the eventual reconciliation of Hegel with the Christian religion in the speculative thrust of his final philosophical system, Hegel himself, during the most productive years of his career as a philosopher, never left any question as to the fact that that very system owed its primary speculative inspiration to a more profound understanding of the Christian religion. This new understanding we can begin to

see emerge in the painful struggles of the fragmentary *Jugendschriften*. Indeed, although Hegel in his published writings does not explicitly refer to these tortuously wrought programmatic essays of his youth, one cannot but be struck by his poignant insistence in both the Preface and Introduction to the *Phenomenology* that "to reach

the stage of genuine knowledge . . . a long and laborious journey must be undertaken" and that "the road can be looked on as the path of doubt, or more properly a highway of despair." 4 The *Jugendschriften* road from the Tübingen essay of 1793, through the Berne essays, to the so-called 1800 "Fragment of a System" written at Frankfurt was indeed one of labor and despair intellectually and personally. It continued to be that during the six years at Jena, 1801 to 1807, as he was developing the ideas for his entire system and for the *Phenomenology* published in that last year.

Unlike some of his interpreters, however, Hegel apparently never considered that there was a radical or conclusive "break" in his intellectual development. He did not, as he once remarked about Schelling, carry on his education in public, and the *Jugendschriften*, which he never destroyed and some of whose fundamental ideas he clearly appropriated later in his published writings, were his earliest attempts to educate himself in the lonely privacy of his own mind and tutorial study. There were indeed false starts and significant revisions of basic conceptualities throughout these early essays, but as H. S. Harris' book has so well documented,⁵ Hegel had a fairly clear idea of what he wanted to do as an intellectual pioneer as early as 1793. Because of this fact, the *Jugendschriften* are best understood as a series of programmatic essays which, when read in their chronological sequence and taken as a whole, reveal the young Hegel's determination to confront and resolve a rather carefully selected set of intellectual problems. They are problems which he knew could not be avoided, but must be squarely faced if he were eventually to achieve his self-chosen goals as a critical thinker and *Volkserzieher*. The continually revised perspectives he developed on these problems are anything

but disconnected expressions of an erratic and undisciplined mind. In fact, when discussing the conceptual connection between the ideas of the *Jugendschriften* and those of later writings on the relationship of philosophy and religion, Harris remarks,

One of the most remarkable things about the development of Hegel's philosophy is that ideas mature in a sort of steady succession and once matured, remain fairly stable even while other ideas are developing around and above them.⁶

Indeed, in the famous letter to Schelling dated 2 November 1800, with all the *Jugendschriften* on religion now behind him, Hegel himself could speak of his intellectual journey to date as one of "scientific development." In that "scientific development," he writes,

which began from the more subordinate needs of man, I was bound to be driven on to science, and the ideal of my youth had to be transformed at the same time into reflective form, into a system. I ask myself now, while I am still occupied with this, how I am to find a way back to intervention in the life of men. 7

The fuller understanding of this pregnant autobiographical note will be taken up later in the chapter, but at this precise midpoint between the 1793 Tübingen essay on *Volksreligion* and the 1807 publication of the *Phenomenology* it is significant to observe that Hegel apparently saw some "scientific" or philosophical continuity albeit continuity by "transformation" in the labors of the *Jugendschriften* essays. The key to this continuity-in-transformation, I will argue, as is excellently documented by Harris, is his systematic working out of the ideas related to the three canons for an adequate *Volksreligion* specified in the 1793 Tübingen essay. Consequently, Hegel's philosophical reconciliation with the Christian religion in his later system was not, to borrow a phrase he used in another context, "shot from a pistol." It was tortuously "mediated" by the sustained and penetrating "scientific" inquiry into the nature and function of religion in human culture manifest in the *Jugendschriften*.

Hegel's final estimate of Jesus' religious significance in history, for example, as understood by the witness of the Christian community in doctrine and cult, was the accumulated *result* of his early moves in these essays away from what he called the purely "formal" and "abstract" interpretation of religion developed under Kant's Enlightenment ideal of "critical philosophy," towards the more "concrete" interpretation of religion under the Graeco-Romantic ideal of living intuition rooted in *Phantasie* and *Herz*. And while

the movement toward reconciliation was clearly not completed in these essays, when Hegel began to speak more in the later essays of "love" as the spiritual principle which overcomes the alienation between man and man, and man and God, a principle which operates dialectically as the process of "unity, separated opposites, reunion,"⁸ he developed his argument by appealing approvingly to the Gospel of John's understanding of Jesus' religion as the religion of love.⁹ In so doing, he was working through to the fundamental ontological and epistemological paradigm of the reconciling dialectic of Absolute Spirit which was to be the hallmark of his mature system. Christomythic symbolism, at least of the Johannine type, had *begun* to provide him with a *Begrifflichkeit* to justify his later speculative rise to the Infinite. The final speculative "way" was not yet clear in these essays, but an incipient reconciliation with Christianity had begun and that is why it is

important to see how and why Hegel's early acrimonious attitude toward Christianity in these essays was sublated/preserved and yet cancelled in his development toward the later system. To this descriptive task we now turn.

The Aspiration of the *Volkserzieher*: A New *Volksreligion*

First of all, the obvious must be stated: Hegel was a child of the Enlightenment. The young Hegel shared all the enthusiasm voiced by Kant in the call to get release from "self-incurred tutelage" and to "have the courage to use your own reason."¹⁰ The focus of the critique engendered by this ideal of rational enlightenment as it motivated the young Hegel was politics and religion and the alliance forged between the two in existing church-state relations. In 1795, two years after he left the *Stift* in Tübingen, Hegel wrote to Schelling while tutoring in Berne,

I believe there is no better sign of the times than this, that humanity is set forth to itself as so worthy of respect; a proof is that the halo around the heads of the oppressors and gods of the earth is disappearing. The philosophers are proving this worthiness, the people will feel it and not simply ask for their rights which are now brought low in the dust, but take them back themselves/repossess themselves. Religion and politics have played *the same* hidden game together, the former has taught what despotism willed, the dishonouring of the human race, its inability to achieve any good, or to amount to anything on its own. . . . I exhort myself always in the words of the *Lebensläufe*: "Strive toward the sun my friends, that the salvation of the human race may soon come to fruition! What use are the hindering leaves? or the branches? Cleave through them to the sunlight, and strive till ye be weary! 'Tis good so, for so shall ye sleep the better!"¹¹

This quotation breathes the rationalist humanism, historical optimism and disdain of established authorities which Hegel shared with most of his educated young contemporaries. But it also gives us an indication of Hegel's own personal aspirations. Hegel was convinced he was living in a kairotic era, what he saw as a time of "new birth" in Western culture.¹² His vocational goals as a student were centered on the issue as to how he could serve as a mid-wife in this cultural re-birth. H. S. Harris is clearly correct that the young Hegel had as his vocational ideal to become, as a teacher, a *Volkserzieher* leader of the people.¹³ This explains, in part, his preoccupation with the similarities and contrasts he

set forth between Jesus and Socrates in these early writings. He wanted to be a *Volkserzieher* as a *Volkslehrer*, and both Jesus and Socrates were important case studies for the young Hegel in such a hoped-for vocation.

It is very important to recognize, however, that Hegel's earliest scholarly interest as a child of the rationalist Enlightenment drive for "universal," as opposed to "parochial" truths was centered in what we might call a *wissenschaftliche* history of humanity,¹⁴ and that the *Jugendschriften* on religion were approached within this larger vision. This larger vision of his task was motivated by a deep dissatisfaction with the present state of things in Germanic culture in particular and the Anglo-European world in general. Established religion and politics had conspired to enslave the mind and heart of Western man, and the initial concern of a *Volkserzieher* must be to find a way forward to transcend the present state of things.¹⁵

Hegel believed that the ideal relation between religion and the state, based on the principle of individual freedom, had been achieved in Greek culture, particularly that of Periclean Athens. The impact of this Hellenic ideal on the young Hegel can hardly be overestimated¹⁶ an ideal glorified in the poetic works of his friend Hölderlin and those greater writers, Schiller and Goethe. The problem was how to revivify the fundamental principles of that ideal for his own culture. Thus, for the young Hegel, the way forward, initially, was the way backward to discover, historically, how things got the way they were in the decline from that ideal. To know the *Volksgeist* of a people is to understand the reciprocal influence of the religion and politics of that people. Thus, when we discover the young Hegel preoccupied with the problem of

developing norms for a mature and creative *Volksreligion* in the 1793 Tübingen essay, we are not surprised that the third canon or criterion is that "It must be so constituted that all the needs of life the public affairs of the State are tied in with it."¹⁷ Hegel, even at this early point in his career, was already committed to the view voiced in his later lectures that "a nation which has a false or bad conception of God, has also a bad State, bad government, bad laws."¹⁸

The Critique of the *Volkserzieher*: The Search for a Usable Past

Hegel took the position that the reality of the present bad state of things was rooted fundamentally in a bad religious conception of man and God in this case, errors which he believed were historically rooted

in certain conceptions belonging intrinsically to the Christian religion as it developed since the time of Jesus. It is in this context we must understand his early passion to discover how the Christian religion had become heteronomously "positive" and, in view of the fact that one could not simply change a culture's religious heritage like changing hats, how it might possibly be reformed to serve the interests of a creative *Volksreligion* on the order of the Hellenic ideal. Because of the intimate linkage between a people's religious conceptions and the political order which they develop, and because the present political and constitutional inequities of the German states were being bolstered by sanctions of overt and tacit approval by the established church (both Lutheran and Catholic), Hegel sought, as a budding *Volkserzieher*, to undercut both the theologically "abstract" and historically "positive" defense of Christianity in its prevailing "orthodox" forms. If he could do this, he thought, then there was at least a minimal hope that a new rationally rechristened Christianity, understood as a true "virtue religion" by the masses, would find itself incapable of supporting the political *status quo*. This powerful political hope behind Hegel's religious critiques must not be overlooked. The hope of altering the "ethical substance," the *Sittlichkeit*, of the people could perhaps be realized if Christianity could be doctrinally and institutionally transformed to fulfill the role of an authentic *Volksreligion*. That was the young Hegel's fondest hope. And it is that passionate political hope which fueled some of Hegel's bitterest attacks on traditional Christianity in the *Jugendschriften*, especially in the essay, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion," written in its first draft in 1795. 19

The Theoretical Critique: The Role of Reason and Virtue Religion

Hegel's initial weapons for attack were, one might say, both theoretical and historical in character. Kant's critical philosophy (together with insights derived from Fichte's *Critique of All Revelation* and Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*) provided him the theoretical basis for his critique of Christianity as a "positive" and theologically "dogmatic" religion, and the Hellenic ideal of a creative *Volksreligion* provided him with the historical contrast against which he could measure the "unhappy" character of Christianitya character in large part inherited from Judaism. Thus, in the first important programmatic essay of his youth, the Tübingen essay of 1793, which is devoted to an analysis of the nature and function of a true *Volksreligion*, the first canon or criterion is that, "Its doctrines must be grounded on universal reason," and this "so that every man

sees and feels their obligatory force." 20 Further, in "The Life of Jesus," written in Berne in 1795, he opens the essay with the dictum, "Reason [Vernunft], pure and incapable of all limits, is deity itself. . . . Reason is that which makes man acquainted with his vocation [Bestimmung], an unconditional purpose of his life."²¹ And in "The Positivity of the Christian Religion," the first draft of which was also begun in 1795, Hegel states that "the aim and essence of all true religion, our religion included, is human morality, and that all the more detailed doctrines of Christianity, all means of propagating them, and all its obligations . . . have their worth and their sanctity appraised according to their close or distant connection with that aim."²² The echoes of Kant's philosophy are plainly audible in those assertions, and the *Vernunft* to which Hegel refers is the "practical reason" of Kant which is the ground of all moral, hence religious, obligation and duty. Both Jesus and the Christian religion as a whole are brought to judgment before the bar of Kantian reason in these essays and one is left with no doubt tht Hegel finds them wanting in most respects. No doubt both the practical reality of government censorship and his personal conviction that a *Volkserzieher* cannot proceed as a mad iconoclast if he wishes to win the confidence of the "unenlightened" masses required he proceed carefully and in as positive a manner as possible, but the contrast between almost all of the traditional Christian doctrines and the Hegelian reinterpretation is sharp. The basic concern behind Hegel's earliest critique is to assert the autonomy of man as a rational being over against *all* established authorities and *all* heteronomous belief systems which were not based on the pure reason of moral

consciousness. The Enlightenment Kantian critique is definitive for his earliest reassessments of the Christian religion.

We should add a word of qualification, however. For whatever reasons, whether owing to expediency or based on conviction, Hegel *did* pursue his critique in such a way as to try to separate Jesus from many aspects of the "positive" religion which developed after his appearance in history. That is not to say Jesus escapes some rough handling by Hegel, especially in the "positivity" essay where the sectarian and authoritarian character of Christianity, for example, is in part tied to Jesus' decision to "fix the number of his trusted friends at twelve" in contrast with the practice of Socrates. The bite of Hegel's criticism is keen: "They [Socrates' disciples] loved Socrates because of his virtue and philosophy, not virtue and philosophy because of him . . . Socrates did not have seven disciples, or three times three; any friend of virtue was welcome."²³

Yet, the fact remains that Hegel, in tune with most so-called "liberal" theologies then and ever since, did seek to exonerate Jesus from many of

the ills that followed from the religion which was later propagated in his name. It was an attempt, to use a familiar phrase, to separate the religion *of* Jesus from the religion *about* him.²⁴ That attempt was certainly methodologically arbitrary, if not almost grotesque at times, especially in "The Life of Jesus" essay where Jesus is pictured as proceeding around Galilee parroting Kant by saying "what you will to be as a universal maxim among men . . . act according to such a maxim."²⁵ Jesus' teaching is set forth as counselling men "to revere the eternal law of social morality [Sittlichkeit] and Him whose holy will is incapable of being affected by something other than that law."²⁶ Yet, Jesus *was* a teacher of virtue, universal virtue, "of the authentic morality and the purified veneration of God,"²⁷ and this, his true "merit," was what was subordinated by the disciples in their *mistaken* "positive" interpretation of him as a unique God-man on whom they were slavishly dependent, as to an external "Lord," for their eternal salvation. This wholly "positive" and "authoritarian" view of Jesus remained anathema for the young Hegel *and* the mature Hegel, though the latter was to find a way speculatively to mediate this view more in keeping with what he understood to be the true intentions behind the dogmatic formulations of the church.

At any rate, Hegel was sure *Jesus* did not understand *himself* the way his disciples did. Thus he interprets Jesus as saying,

that which I teach, I do not offer as my own sudden insights, as my own property; I do not demand that anyone at all should accept it upon my authority . . . I subject it to the judgment of universal reason, which each person may determine to believe or not.²⁸

So even within the limitations of the Kantian philosophical overlay

which guided his interpretation at this point Jesus had high stature for Hegel as a teacher of virtue, a role which, sadly enough, he was sure was not properly appreciated by the disciples. Hegel complains, "Ah, would that men had halted there and had not added to the duties imposed by reason [as taught by Jesus] a mass of burdens to plague poor humanity."²⁹ As he put it in a later revision of the 1793 Tübingen essay, "Faith in Christ is faith in a personified ideal,"³⁰ an ideal of reason and freedom based on the Kantian ethic.

Yet, interestingly enough, in this later revision he also suggests approvingly that the peculiar reverence for Jesus by the believer, as necessarily *different* from that of a disciple of Socrates, is that he is *not* as the latter, just a model case of the virtuous man, but he is *virtue itself personified!*³¹ That is to say, he suggests that Jesus is the *visible* presence of the ideal of virtue which, as Plato remarked, all mortals

must love when encountered. This is a conundrum for the understanding (*Verstand*), he says there, but not for the religious imagination (*Phantasie*).

One cannot and should not place too much emphasis on this early passing observation, for Jesus and Socrates tended to "leap-frog" one another in these early years in Hegel's estimation of their greater or lesser significance as teachers of virtue. But when we discuss the *changes* in Hegel's earliest negative view of Christianity which are signified in the writings after 1797, what Harris notes as the period of emphasis on "Reason and Freedom" in Berne, we will there find Jesus pictured not simply as the virtuous exemplar of a life based on the categorical imperative, but as the ideal exemplar of a life based on the principle of "love." As we shall see, Hegel gradually came to recognize that a Kantian interpretation of Christianity and religion on strictly moralistic terms in the form of the "internal" categorical imperative was no less "positive" or alienating to genuine religious experience than the historically "positive" and "external" interpretation of Christianity and religion characterized by a rationalistic orthodoxy or a legalistic Judaism. The latter "leave their lord outside themselves" while the former "carries his lord in himself, yet at the same time is his own slave." 32 Love, by contrast, unites man with man, and man with God at the level of *Gefühl* and *Herz*, and Jesus at least the Jesus witnessed to by the author of the gospel of John gradually became for Hegel, in his positive function as the founder of the Christian community, the "personification" of divine love in his teaching and life. "Love proper" or "true union" consists in the actual reconciliation of living beings in community *beyond* the abstractly theoretical deliverances of *Verstand* and *Vernunft*.

practical reason *per se*.³³ Jesus "personified" this truth and sought to create a community where reconciling love was the principle of its life. This was Hegel's Frankfurt interpretation and this transition in his thinking about Jesus and the Christian religion is of critical importance in understanding what we might call the "metaphysics of love" which emerged in his mature philosophical system. At this earlier point, however, in 1800, this actual reconciled unity of finite and infinite, man and God, and man and man, is understood as "a reality beyond all reflection" and hence "philosophy . . . has to stop short of religion."³⁴

Now I suggested above that Hegel's earliest attacks on traditional Christianity were both theoretical and historical. The Kantian Enlightenment critique of established religion as heteronomously "positive" and "dogmatic," because it "enslaved" the believer to an external authority "other" than and "over-against" the universal moral principle of practical reason in man himself, Hegel followed faithfully in the earliest writings

though we noted a transition and critique of Kant's own position in some respects emerging in the Frankfurt period. It is now time to say a word about his historical critique.

The Historical Critique: The Problem of "Positivity" and "Human Nature"

Hegel's critique of traditional Christianity as unsuitable to be a creative *Volksreligion* was undergirded by the transparent *Volkserzieher* conviction that once people came to understand historically how and why things got the way they were, they would be prepared to act in such a way as to correct the errors which had gained credence over the centuries. Thus, the most important of Hegel's earliest essays were devoted to uncovering historically what it was about the origins of Christianity which provided an inducement to its becoming a "positive" religion and how its "spirit" or *Geist* as supernaturally otherworldly in religious hope and ethics took shape as it did in spite of the fact it was originated by Jesus as primarily a "virtue" religion based on universal reason. Our analysis here cannot be exhaustive but only suggestive. In it all, it must be stressed again, one must not forget that behind the critique is Hegel's concern to investigate whether and in what way the popular conception of Christianity might be reconstructed so that it could serve as the basis for a creative *Volksreligion* in what he thought was a budding kairotic era in German and Western culture.

As early as his Gymnasium studies in Stuttgart he was keenly interested in what we have called a "philosophical history of humanity," and a dominant inspiration for this interest in the budding *Volkserzieher* was C. Meiners' *Grundriss der Geschichte*

der Menschheit, published in 1795.³⁵ Harris is clearly correct that the young Hegel's "anthropology" at this point had a kind of ambiguity at its base. On the one hand, there was the tendency to assume that there is an *abiding* human nature which, in spite of the relative character of the historical accidentals of a given time and place which shape its expression, remains constant and can be conceptually extracted by critical comparisons of the universal similarities of expression within differing historical forms of cultural behavior. On the other hand, there was the tendency to assume that human nature in some sense *develops* in history and that human choices and the fateful consequences of "chance" connected with that freedom to choose materially affect that development. The satisfactory resolution of this ambiguity for him came in his later system, beginning with the *Phenomenology*, but for us here it is important to observe that both assumptions played a role in his historical critique of Christianity.

and that this critique was a function of his larger concern to develop "the principles for a history of mankind."³⁶ Both assumptions were compatible with the then-reigning conceptions of Enlightenment humanism, i.e., belief in the inherent rationality of all men *and* in the potential perfectability of human nature in history by means of disciplined, but truly "free" choices.

The first assumption served Hegel in dealing with the issue of man's universal nature as "naturally" religious and his capability of being religiously "inspired" or "moved to action" by a teacher of virtue such as Jesus or Socrates. It was the presupposition that, as he put it in the 1800 revision of the "Positivity" essay,

man has a natural sense or consciousness of a supersensible world and an obligation to the divine. If nothing whatever in our own hearts responded to an external challenge to virtue and religion, if there were no strings in our own nature from which this challenge resounded, then Jesus' endeavor to inspire men to virtue and a better religion would have had the same character and the same outcome as St. Anthony of Padua's zeal in preaching to fish.³⁷

This point is a logical extension of the Kantian "general principle" he had laid down in the original 1795 draft of the "Positivity" essay that "the aim and essence of all true religion, our religion [Christianity] included, is human morality."³⁸ Jesus' own ministry was predicated on this assumption of the universal religious nature of man and his innate capacity and responsibility for moral action. Thus, Hegel says, Jesus, in confronting the "positive" Jewish legalism of his day, "undertook to raise religion and virtue to morality and to restore to morality the freedom which is its essence."³⁹ "He urged not a virtue grounded on authority . . . but a free virtue."⁴⁰ To this extent Hegel's view of Jesus and the

"essence" of the religion he founded was thoroughly Kantian and Enlightenment in tone and anthropological conviction. A virtue grounded on authority is, as he put it, "either meaningless or a direct contradiction in terms."⁴¹

Yet, when Hegel began to revise this same essay in 1800, he was beginning to be restive about Enlightenment critiques of religion (including Kant's) based on a too "abstract" conception of human nature as "religious." Many of the historical "accidentals" of religion which such critiques relegated to the realm of "positivity" began to be more significant in qualifying his concept of "human nature." This restiveness is a parallel to the transition we noticed in his theoretical critique of Christianity when he began to interpret the essence of Christianity as taught by

Jesus as something less a matter of "will" and "ought" than of "feeling" and "love." The concrete demands of "Phantasie und Herz" were beginning to qualify the more abstract conceptions of "Reason and Freedom." Or to put it another way, the empirical and concrete realities of Hegel's investigations of religion in history and on the "plane of life" began to influence a search for a more adequate conceptual interpretation of religion on the "plane of reflection." He was seeking, as he put it, a more adequate conception of the "ideal of human nature" which would take into account "the special and necessary multiplex needs of religious feeling." 42

Positive Positivity

Although it might seem awkward to put it this way, one could say that Hegel was trying to work out a more discriminating conception of "positivity" in religiona conception which would recognize the difference between what one might call the "negative positivity" of religion and a "positive positivity."⁴³ The dominant Enlightenment conception of "positivity" was too broad, abstract, and even "intellectualist." It assumed that *all* the non- or even trans-reflective aspects of religion apart from an abstract imperative were "positive" in the *negative* sense. They were either irrelevant or subversive to religion in its "purity." "Pure" religion from that point of view is a religion of abstract morality, over against which both spontaneous subjective "feeling" and "sense" in the individual, and objective formalized "actions" of liturgy and cult in the community, are intrinsically "positive" in a wholly negative sense. Thus, given such a contrast between "one natural [i.e., "universal" and theoretically "pure"] religion" and "many positive religions," it was

accepted that "a positive religion is a contranatural or a supranatural one, containing concepts and information transcending understanding [*Verstand*] and reason [*Vernunft*] and requiring feelings and actions which would not come naturally to men."⁴⁴

Hegel now challenges the adequacy and concrete realism of such an interpretation of what is "natural" to the universal nature of man and his religious needs including the concrete experience which flows from it. He is *not* questioning, let it be noted, either whether there is an "abiding" or universal human nature, or whether "understanding and reason" have any role to play in a historical and philosophical critique of religion, Christianity included. Rather, he is seeking a broader, more comprehensive, and at the same time more sympathetic, conception of human nature as one which requires adequate recognition of the non-reflective or "non-intellectual" aspects of human experience and especially a rec-

ognition of how these aspects are reflected in religious experience. Man is a being of sense as well as reason, of feeling as well as thinking, of passionate action as well as cool reflection. Each aspect must be respected in its own domain and each must be properly assessed by criteria appropriate to it.

To reduce a definition of "pure" or authentic religion to "universal concepts of human nature and God's attributes is too empty," Hegel writes.⁴⁵ Such approaches tend to reduce religion to philosophical discussions of the abstract moral imperative where the question of religion is exhausted in its significance by the "one-sided standard" of the "freedom of the will."⁴⁶ "Hence" Hegel writes,

what our time needs instead perhaps is to hear something proving the very opposite of what results from this "enlightening" application of universal concepts [i.e., the idea that everything in religion and Christianity not deducible from that "one-sided standard" is "negatively positive"], though of course such a proof would not proceed on the principles and method proffered to the old dogmatic theologians by the culture of their day. On the contrary, it would derive that now discarded theology from what we now know as a need of human nature and would thus exhibit its naturalness and inevitability.⁴⁷

Hegel notes that the alternative "derivation" he suggests "presupposes the belief that the convictions of many centuries represented in dogmatic Christianity, regarded as sacrosanct, true and obligatory by the millions who lived and died by them were not, at least on their subjective side, downright folly or plain immorality." Hegel is making no brief for dogmatic orthodoxy on its "objective side" in history "which is so repugnant to human reason and erroneous through and through"; rather, he suggests, in

spite of that fact, "we are still humane enough to raise the question: How is it possible to explain the construction of such a [dogmatic] fabric," which in spite of its untenability from the standpoint of critical reason, still nonetheless sustained the religious life of millions in Western history?⁴⁸

The "explanation," of course, will necessarily follow from one's conception of what is "natural and inevitable" about universal human nature and of what are the religious needs which characterize it. What new conception of human nature and its religious needs does Hegel now suggest as a way to help explain such an apparent conundrum?

I am here assuming from the start that human nature itself of necessity needs to recognize a Being who transcends our conception of human agency, to make the intuition of that Being's perfection the animating spirit

of human life, and to devote time, feelings, and organizations directly to this intuition, independently of aims of other kinds. 49

Or, to put it another way, man is so constituted that

his nature always and necessarily has religious feeling as one of its *higher* needs, and the way he satisfies it, i.e., the system of his faith, his worship, and his duties, can never have been either stupidity unalloyed or that impure stupidity which leaves room for immorality of every kind.50

Now since these statements are significantly indicative of the young Hegel's reappraisal of the concept of positivity in religion, it will pay us well to render them closer inspection.

First of all, Hegel is here arguing for the recognition that a proper conception of human nature, and of human religion which flows from it, must respect the needs and rights of human "feeling" as well as human "reason." Feeling, as Hegel uses the term in this context, may be said to represent both what we may call a human faculty for a non-analytic or wholistic understanding of existence and a faculty of creative volitional motivation. Religious feeling inwardly "intuits" the eternal reality of the divine as the source of all that is "high, noble and good" in human nature. Religious feeling is also what "animates" the human desire to celebrate and symbolize this unity of the divine and human natures by creating special cultic systems wholly devoted to this purpose. Hence, it is religious feeling which is the source of that "necessary and inevitable" tendency toward the development of those "positive" differentia which characterize all historical religions their dogmatic "systems" of faith, their "worship" cults, and the "duties" peculiar to these cults and to life in general.

Reason, in its purely analytic function and as a faculty for the production of universal concepts, cannot adequately deal with the "truth" which religion represents because it rigidly separates [trennen] the purely rational and universal elements in it from the non-rational and "accidental" elements. But Hegel insists that in religion these two elements are *never* separated. In religion the eternal is always linked to something historically "accidental" because it is in the accidental element that the grateful response of man to God is expressed and rendered concrete in *life*. The "truth" of religion is not an "abstract" concept [Begriff], but a "living" intercourse of the divine and the human. "Universal concepts [*allgemeine Begriffe*]," Hegel stresses, "cannot be applied to religion, or better, to religious experience, because it itself is no concept."⁵¹ The same is true for "human nature," for "the living na-

ture [of man] is always something other than the concept of the same, and hence what for the concept is a mere modification, pure accident, a superfluity, becomes a necessity, something living, perhaps the only thing natural and beautiful." Thus, he suggests, this approach "gives quite a different appearance to the criterion for the positivity of religion" 52it suggests a "positivity" which is, in fact, *natural* and so historically inevitable.

Another way to put this, perhaps, is to say that Hegel is arguing *against* a narrowly intellectualist or gnostic conception of human nature and religion, and *for* an inclusively incarnational conception. That is to say, the concrete historical embodiments of human religion, with their particularizations of systems of faith and cultic observances, are not a regrettable *fall* from universal, authentic, or pure religion, *but a necessary expression of it!* The universal *concretizes* itself in historical forms or what are called "accidentals" (Zufälligkeiten). It actualizes or "becomes" itself in and through particularization. A drift of his thinking which will have enormous consequences in the later system. But for now we must simply note that this historicizing or incarnational thrust of human nature in the religious realm is a natural, inevitable and, to use the phrase we have coined, a "positive" form of positivity. Religious feeling requires positivity and religious feeling, we are told, has rights which are as "high" as philosophical reason. In fact, the truth known about God and His relation to man which is mediated in the phenomena related to religious experience is said to be *higher* than that which can be known by philosophical reason in the "Fragment of a System," written during this same year (1800). There we are told boldly that "philosophy . . . has to stop short of religion because it is a process of thinking and, as such a process, implies

an opposition with non-thinking [processes] as well as the opposition between the thinking mind and the object of thought."⁵³ And by "philosophy" here we must understand he is referring to philosophy *à la* Kant's prescriptions.

We shall have occasion to comment more on this later, but we should note in passing that for the Frankfurt Hegel the rights and needs of *Phantasie* and *Herz* have seriously qualified, indeed apparently contradicted, his earlier assertion that "reason, pure and incapable of all limits, is deity itself."⁵⁴ He was having trouble reconciling the demands of the first two criteria for an authentic *Volksreligion* as stated in the 1793 programmatic essay in Tübingen. The first, "Its doctrines must be grounded on universal reason," which occupied his mind and research during the Berne period (1793-1796) when he wrote "Das Leben Jesu" and the first draft of the "Positivity" essay, was fitting uneasily with the second, "Fancy, heart, and sensibility must not thereby go empty

away," which was the center of his research and writing during the Frankfurt period (1797-1800) when he wrote "The Spirit of Christianity," the second draft of the "Positivity" essay and the so-called "Fragment on Love" and "Fragment of a System." Another way to put it is that the Kantian and Enlightenment rational critiques of religion were clashing with the ever-alluring Greek ideal of a religion of *Phantasie*, *Herz*, and *Sinnlichkeit*.

Negative Positivity

But to return now to the question of Hegel's changing attitude toward "positivity" in religion which emerged in the 1800 revision of the "Positivity" essay, and to the question of how this changing attitude came about when he came to evaluate more favorably the legitimate needs and rights of human "feeling" in the "positive" differentia of religious traditions, we must further explore the relation between a "positive positivity" and a "negative positivity." That is to say, we must explore the way in which the role and rights of reason remained firm for Hegel in these emerging distinctions. We also must note just how these views affect the critique of Jesus and the Christian religion which this essay so scathingly sets forth.

One can begin by saying that if the dynamics of religion or religious experience cannot now for Hegel be exhaustively reduced to purely abstract or theoretical questions about man's nature, nonetheless just such theoretical questions remain the province of philosophical thought and are subject to reason's analytic and practical critique. I say analytic and practical critique not because Hegel is everywhere consistent in these essays in distinguishing between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, but because religion in its publicly responsible form remains here for Hegel fundamentally a matter of

virtue or morality. It is the analytic function of reason in all its forms which recognizes the *difference* between the universal demands of the moral imperative in reason and the particular forms or ways in which that imperative is bodied forth in history under the "animation" of religious feelings in various religious traditions. Even to use the word "positivity" is to acknowledge the claims of reason in its legitimate critique of religion. Reason distinguishes between the universal and its particularization, between eternal truths and the transient forms of their embodiment in history and from one culture to another. When finite forms or manifestations of the eternal are taken to be identical with or indispensably wedded to that which they represent (or represent,) then such idolatry and the heteronomous authority which accrues to them must be challenged in the name of universal reason as

"negatively positive." Here autonomy and freedom are at stake and the claims of reason come into their own. We can do no better than hear Hegel himself.

Actions, persons [and] recollections of the past may be considered as sacrosanct in a religion. Reason [Vernunft] proves their accidental character; it demands that all that is sacrosanct be eternal, imperishable. That, however, does not amount to a proof of the positivity of all these religious matters, for imperishability and sacrosanctity can and must be linked to something accidental. In one's thinking of the eternal, the eternal is linked to the accidentality of one's thinking. It is quite another thing if the accidental as such, such as what was mentioned above, as what it is for the understanding [Verstand], makes claims to imperishability and sacrosanctity, and to veneration. Then reason's right to speak of positivity steps forth. 55

Again,

An ideal of human nature, however, is quite different from general concepts of man's vocation or of man's relation to God. The ideal does permit of particularization, of determination in detail, and therefore it demands appropriate religious actions, feelings, usages, demands an excess of these, a mass of excessiveness which in the lamplight of general concepts seems only ice and stone. Only if this excess annuls freedom does it become positive, i.e., if it has pretensions against understanding and reason [Verstand und Vernunft] and contradicts their necessary laws.56

Hegel is here clearly asserting that reason has its rightful role to play in dealing with the phenomena of religious experience and that reason *within its own sphere* has autonomous authority. When any "positively positive" expression of religion "annuls freedom," i.e., assays to put man under the bondage of the purely external

authority of "actions, persons and recollections of the past" which were originally spontaneous, "natural" and free expressions of religious "feeling," then such "positive positivities" become "negative positivities." When "actions demanded by the most natural religion come to be done only to order and out of blind obedience," then "religion has become positive at this stage: it was not so originally."⁵⁷

Reason, then, has its role its indispensable role in analytically distinguishing the universal from the particular, the transcendent infinite from the historically "accidental" and finite in all religious traditions. But in the hierarchy of the human needs which religion embodies, "understanding and reason can be judges only if appeal is made to them. What never claims to be intellectual [verständig] or rational [vernünftig]

cannot fall under their jurisdiction." He adds in a rhetorically flourished passage,

Understanding and reason may claim to sit in judgment on everything; they readily pretend that everything should be intellectual and rational. Hence they descry positivity easily enough, and the screams about mental slavery, superstition, and suppression of conscience continue without end. The most ingenuous actions, the most innocent feelings, and the most beautiful imaginative pictures [die schönsten Darstellungen der Phantasie] all experience this harsh treatment. But its effect accords with its inappropriateness.

Intellectualist people [verständige Menschen] believe their words to be true when they address feeling, imagination [Einbildungskraft] and religious needs in intellectualist terms; they cannot conceive why their truth is resisted when they preach to deaf ears. Their mistake is to offer stones to the child who asks for bread. Their wares are useful if it is a matter of building a house. But then anyone who claimed bread was fit for housebuilding would also be properly contradicted.

58

In these words one clearly hears the concerns of the *Volkserzieher*. One also recognizes the jockeying for position of the intuitionist romantic and the analytic rationalist conceptions of human nature in the *Volkserzieher*. On the plane of reflection Hegel's home is now Athens, an aesthetic home made present to him in the romantic poetry of Hölderlin, Schiller and Goethe. Hegel is increasingly divided within himself. *Gefühl*, *Phantasie*, *Einbildungskraft* and *Herz* are claiming their due over against *Verstand* and *Vernunft*.

What we have discovered in this discussion so far is that Hegel's early *Volkserzieher* concern to work out a "philosophic history of humanity" has required the development of a new conception of

human nature which runs against some dominant anthropological convictions in Enlightenment rationalism. To deal with the complex phenomena of religious history requires a new respect for the "feeling" nature of man and his concrete historical needs flowing from it. The conception of an authentic *Volksreligion* must take these needs into account and "satisfy" them. The question as to whether or not Christianity could fill this role in Hegel's Germany must be set within the context of this newly wroughtout "ideal of human nature" and the recognition of the "natural and inevitable" positive positivity of every religious traditionincluding Christianity. To dismiss Christianity as merely a "positive" religion is to try to settle the issue too quickly, arbitrarily and unsympathetically; it neglects the "subjective side" of the needs of human religious experience. The fact that Christianity has a "system" of beliefs, duties and cultic observances connected with it is to be accepted as natural and in-

evitable, and these express the intuition of the divine present to the "feeling" of its original adherents. They are "accidentals" which satisfy that "feeling" and thus one can understand how, on its subjective side, Christianity has continued to sustain the spiritual life of millions over the centuries. To criticize Christianity as "positive" in this sense is to settle nothing about its truth or falsity at the level of moral and critical reason.

Moreover, Hegel informs us, "the question about positivity does not affect the content of a religion so much as the way in which the religion is conceived, i.e., as something given throughout or as something given *qua* free and freely received." 59 Hence, Hegel states his purpose in this 1800 revision of the "Positivity" essay as follows:

The avowed aim of this essay is not to inquire whether Christianity includes doctrines which are positive, but whether it is a positive religion as a whole . . . is to examine (a) whether in the first beginnings of the Christian faith, in the manner of its origin on Jesus' lips and in his life, there were circumstances which might provide a direct inducement to positivity, so that mere accidents were taken to be things of eternal validity; and (b) whether the Christian religion as a whole was founded on an accident of this kind, a thesis which would be rejected by a reasonable man and repelled by a free one.60

That Christianity on its "objective side" in terms of "content" contained at its inception "positive" doctrines and duties Hegel not only concedes, but *must* concede because he has argued such accidentals in every religion are necessary to the needs of finite thinking and feeling. In the original 1795 introduction to the "Positivity" essay Hegel had stated that "the essence of religion lies elsewhere than in positive doctrine," and at that time this

"elsewhere" was wholly in "the commands of virtue" alone.⁶¹ Now it lies in the "feeling" nature of man which *embodies* the universal commands of virtue, under impetus of *Phantasie*, in concrete doctrinal, ethical and cultic forms. The *Phantasie* creatively concretizes the intuition of religious feeling in the *Phantasie der Völker*. Thus every religion, Christianity included, is initially "given" or posited "qua free and freely received" in keeping with the commands of virtue and under the impetus of feeling and *Phantasie*.

That orthodox Christianity as presented and understood in his time was "repugnant to reason" was also crystal clear to Hegel. It had become "negatively positive," repressive of the intuitional religious feelings of Western man (and the Germanic peoples in particular) and contrary to the universal commands of virtue and moral reason. Hegel says he will not address himself to "the character which the Christian religion might

bear in our own day,"⁶² but he does in fact do this, and his concern with the present perversity of Christianity in his own nation cannot be allayed by a purely historical or scholarly inquiry about the origins of Christian faith. No, some of Hegel's most scathing rhetoric is reserved for this issue. The tactful, calm *Volkserzieher* who is in search for "a usable past" in Christianity as a *Volksreligion* frequently breaks into fiery denunciations of the Christian Church and its authoritarian stranglehold on the spiritual life of his people, on the educational systems of their public life and on the political institutions of their national confederation.⁶³ What had happened to Christianity in terms of "negative positivity" was clear. How it was *possible* for it to happen is here his primary concern in dealing with Christian origins. As a *Volkserzieher*, however, he was implicitly seeking at the time he began the essay in 1795 to describe what *might* have been in Christianity, in hopes that what might have been might *still* be possible if the masses, and especially the middle-class, who espoused Christianity could understand its founder and his original religious intention aright.

The Doubts of the *Volkserzieher*: Reasons for Pause

When he finished organizing the essay on "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate" in 1800, Hegel had begun to lose his youthful optimism about the educative reformation of institutionalized Christianity into an authentic *Volksreligion*. That may be why he gave up trying to revise the "Positivity" essay just a few months later. The hope envisioned in the 1793 Tübingen essay about the reformation of Christianity as a "public religion," and the *Volkserzieher* zeal which fueled the production of the "Das Leben

"Jesu" essay in 1795 and the start of the 1795 "Positivity" essay, were fading fast. Why?

The Developing Political Situation in Germany

In part it was due to some disillusioning developments in the political situation of Germany itself, particularly in the Duchy of Würtemburg after the *Landtag* called by Friedrich Eugen in 1797 failed to accomplish the reformation in constitutional freedom for all classes for which Hegel, Hölderin and Schelling had hoped. Indeed, in the light of national events which followed in the train of this first disillusionment, Hegel declared in his 1801 essay on the German constitution, "Germany is no longer a State."⁶⁴ The confidence in the powers of "enlightened reason"

to transform the life of the *Volk* was being shaken by the intransigence of the economic and political *status quo* of the ruling classes. The church was wedded to this *status quo* system both by the fact that civil liberties were largely tied to one's membership in the official State church and by the fact that its doctrinal self-understanding, argued historically from the New Testament, affirmed that the church's authority and mission was centered in concerns related to the "private" realm of individual salvation and "the world beyond." Its "public" responsibility involved defending its sole authority in the spiritual realm by protecting its power as a social institution. In such a situation the church, both Lutheran and Catholic, was clearly both unwilling and unable to exercise any prophetic or revolutionary criticism of the economic and political system upon which it depended for its institutional power. Thus, both politically and theologically it continued to strangle the aspirations of the *Volk* for political and religious freedom, a freedom based on what Hegel called in the "Positivity" essay "friendship."⁶⁵ The power of "enlightened reason" to create a *Geist* of such *Volk* friendship between 1795 and 1802 was not making much headway against the hard facts of a mode of "alienated" life perpetuated by the economic and political *status quo* as supported by the church.

This hardening pessimism of Hegel about the reformation of Germany's *Sittlichkeit* is reflected in the closing paragraph of his famous essay, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," the final draft of which was completed in 1800.

The Christian Church has oscillated to and fro between these extremes of the multiplied or diminished consciousness of friendship, hate, or indifference toward the world, between these extremes which

are to be found inside the antitheses of God and the world, the divine and life, but it is contrary to its essential character to find peace in a non-personal living beauty. It is its destiny that church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action, can never be fused together into one.⁶⁶

Thus, it seems clear that the political developments which were transpiring before his eyes on "the plane of life" were seriously challenging the early aspirations of the *Volkserzieher*.

Another way to put it is that if Hegel found it difficult to try to reconstruct the public conceptions of Christianity in terms of the first two canons of a *Volksreligion* listed in the 1793 essay (i.e., "Its doctrines must be grounded on universal Reason" *à la* Kant, and "Fancy, heart and sensibility must not thereby go empty away" *à la* the Greek ideal), it also was becoming ever more difficult for him to do so in accordance with the third canon (i.e., "It must be so constituted that all the needs of life

the public affairs of the State are tied in with it"). The very "essence" of Christianity in terms of its "destiny" [Schicksal] as a historical religion seemed to fight against such a transformation. The present political realities were seeming to confirm that judgment.

The Problem of Destiny: Judaism and Christianity

The concept of "fate" or "destiny" [Schicksal] brings us, then, to another reason why Hegel's early optimism as a *Volkserzieher* and *Volkslehrer* was waning. One might say Hegel was forced to face the idealist-realist conflict in his thinking. Which is ultimately more definitive for the reformation of a people's *Sittlichkeit*, the power of the enlightened ideal of reason or the power of the present economic and political system hardened into an intractable historical destiny of exploitative self-interest? This is always the issue between the social transformationist and the radical revolutionary, and Hegel clearly was caught in the tension. It is the issue, also, between the experienced fact of *contradiction* between thought and life, and the question of *how* this contradiction can be transcended or resolved. That is why in facing this issue we can see how and why Hegel was being prepared for that stage of his final system where he asserts that the antithesis or contradiction between the empirically factual and ideally rational is sublated [aufgehoben] in the doctrine of Absolute Spirit. This doctrine of Absolute Spirit is also the presupposition of his later confidence that a true philosophy of history is also a genuine "theodicy."

But we are ahead of ourselves. One should not race ahead of the historical dialectic!

The Tension between Two Anthropologies

To understand how Hegel's early historical studies about the origins of Christianity and the problematic "destiny" they bequeathed to the present German situation emerged, we must turn briefly to his essay, "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal." In this essay he was still trying to exorcise the "negative positivity" which afflicted the present shape of Christianity. And he was here struggling with the second of his early anthropological assumptions that human nature in some sense "changes" or is at least "shaped" or "determined" in an apparently irrevocable manner by the forces of historical *Schicksal*. The abstract, universal potential of human nature, Hegel has already argued, does not "exist" anywhere but in its concrete, actual embodiment in history and culture. Human nature, hence, *is*, to that extent, what it *becomes* in its

historical unfolding, and what it *becomes* produces determinations which affect what it *can become* out of its abstract possibilities, limited now by the cultural weight of its previous actualizations.

In Tillich's terms, Hegel was now facing the issue of man's *given* ontological polarities of dynamics and form, individualization and participation, freedom and destiny.⁶⁷ The first assumption, based upon the changeless character of human nature, provided Hegel the hope for the *kairotic* possibilities of the present in religion and politics, and the stress fell upon the first of each of the polarities. The second assumption, forcing itself upon him because his extensive historical studies of Christianity and Western culture generally, stressed the second of each of the polarities and now began to give him pause. Thus, not only the realism of disillusionment about current political and religious events in Germany, but also the realism of cultural *Schicksal* learned from his historical studies lie behind his waning hopes as a *Volkserzieher*. In simple terms, the question was, "What is the *meaning* of 'fate' or 'destiny' philosophically speaking, and what are its *limits*, if any, historically speaking?" The systematic conflict between his two anthropological assumptions was laid bare and Hegel felt it deeply and personally not only on the plane of reflection but also on the plane of life. This conflict is clearly in evidence in "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal," the essay to which we must now turn.

The "Geist" of Judaism

To put the matter as directly as possible in terms of our interest to see the origins of the young Hegel's ambivalence toward the Christian faith, and what this has to do with his early christology,

we can simply say that Hegel now saw the destiny of Christendom in history as one bequeathed by the religion of Judaism.

The problem of "negative positivity" in Christianity was now largely reduced to the issue of Christianity's *historical antecedents* and Judaism was seen as the culprit. Christianity, after all, was in its origins of Jewish sectJesus was a Jew and so were his disciples. Judaism was the historical and religious "destiny" which shaped the emergence of Christianity. Again, to be as direct as possible, Hegel, in seeking *how* Christianity became *negatively positive*, located the original impetus for such in the Jewish religion and especially in its conception of God as an authoritarian and legal *master* over man, history and nature. "The special characteristic of Jewish religion," Hegel said already in the "Positivity" essay, is "bondage to law," and in the church's "prescribed laws for our mode of thinking, feeling and willing . . . Christians have thus re-

verted to the position of the Jews." 68 The Jewish religion is predicated on the sense of God's alien "otherness" over against us in our finite life in history and nature. "The holy was always outside of them, unseen and unfelt."⁶⁹ It is a religion of inherited positive authority, not human spontaneity, and as such is a religion predicated on the assumption of an alienation [Entfremdung] between the divine and the human. As authoritarian, religious and moral laws for Judaism are legislated for men from the *outside* by the God who stands over against us. As lacking in humane and "beautiful" (read Greek) spontaneity, it posits a radical cleft between moral obligation and sensuous feeling and thus sets up a sense of alienation between God and the world, man and nature. Moreover, since the moral law of God was heteronomously "revealed" and not self-produced by all men out of their innate sense of virtue, those who received this "special" revelation are themselves considered "special" and thus alienated from the rest of humanitymaking universal "friendship" and "love" impossible. Since it is 'Abraham who is the spiritual progenitor of Judaism historically, his experiences were definitive for the *Geist* and destiny of Judaism as it exists historicallyboth as a religious community and as a nation.

The first act by which Abraham becomes the progenitor of a nation is an act of separation which rent the bonds of communal life and loveth the entire set of relationships in which he had hitherto lived with man and nature. These beautiful relationships he thrust away from himself. . . . It was precisely the spirit which had carried Abraham away from his kin which led him through the foreign countries with which he clashed in the sequence of his life, the spirit which maintained itself in strict opposition to everything.⁷⁰

Further on in this context Hegel notes this sense of alienation from other men and nations in history, and from nature, was the inevitable product of Abraham's distorted view of God.

This Judaic *Geist* of alienated consciousness between man and God, nature and God, and man and man became the destiny of Christendom as Hegel now saw it. The sense of unresolved alienation in Christianity between God and man and nature in private religion, as well as the naturally reinforcing tyrannical authoritarianism of both the State and church in the public life of politics and organized religion, are thus historically traceable to this *Geist* of Judaism embodied in its progenitor. Here was the *bête noire* behind the present situation for which Hegel was looking in history. The *Geist* of contemporary Christianity was "negatively positive" in large part because it arose within, and finally succumbed to, the *Geist* of Judaism present in the historical context of its

origin. The sect became a church and the church became a State all predicated on Judaism's religion of alienation and "unhappiness."⁷¹ And for Hegel all the unhappinesses of the Jewish people right down to the present have been simply "consequences and elaborations of their original fate" as a religion of an alienated consciousness. It is and was a religion of slaves and not of free men. That is why its infection of Christianity was so disastrous as far as Germany's present situation was concerned, for a religion of slaves justifies the slave conditions political and religious by divine authority. It thereby precludes a revolutionary reformation of contemporary Germanic political and religious life based on a *Volksreligion* of friendship and love on the order of the Greek ideal.

But if the *Schicksal* of Christianity is thus linked to the *Schicksal* of Judaism, is or was that fate ineluctable? Behind this question lies the issue of hope in history, for if the deliverances of past historical events and decisions to the present cannot *in some way* be transcended, then one is left with a metaphysical and historical determinism which kills the hope for creatively transforming the human condition and cuts the roots of argument for human moral responsibility. Hegel was not about to go this route of argument, but the fact of the oppressive weight of the past resisting such transformation could not be gainsaid. This is why the question of *Schicksal* exercised him so much in this essay.

Now to be as direct as possible, if the *Schicksal* of *present* Christianity could *now* hope to be transcended, then Christian faith at its point of origin also must *have been* able so to transcend the *Schicksal* of Judaism. Again, to be as direct as possible, Hegel's position as a philosophical historian of human experience at this

point was simply that though one is *not* responsible for the historical and cultural circumstances into which one is born, one *is* responsible for what one does with and in those circumstances. To this extent, one's personal destiny is a result of one's free choice. One creates, and *accumulates*, his own destiny. In his penetrating discussion of guilt and punishment in the essay at hand he puts it this way:

A fate [Schicksal] appears to rise only through another's deed; but this is only the occasion of the fate. What really produces it is the manner of receiving and reacting against the other's deed. . . . it is with [someone's] reaction, be it battle or submissive grief, that his guilt, his fate begins.⁷²

In choosing to struggle or not to struggle in one's given circumstances, one creates his *own* destiny.

Hence, whether one's response to given occasions of required actions is that of courage or passivity, one's destiny is rooted in the will and is

his own responsibility. In the former case, i.e., when one acts courageously, "by facing danger he has subjected himself to fate [Schicksal], for he enters the battlefield of might against might and ventures to oppose his adversary," and even in suffering failure " [he] has recognized this possibility [of failure] and so has consciously made [himself] responsible for it." 73 In the latter case, i.e., where the response is passive, the misfortune and suffering endured by refusing to fight back "only becomes his fate because his disdain of those relations [of engagement] is his own will, his free choice."⁷⁴ The *Schicksal* of our lives, then, is a self-willed *Schicksal* and though the occasion is "given" and hence beyond our control, the precise nature of our response is not. Here in the transcendence of the moral will human responsibility in and for history resides. It remains in every historical moment and was present, therefore, at the time of Jesus.

The Effect on Jesus' Disciples.

Judaism, then, was the *occasion* of Christianity's becoming a negatively positive religion. The response of Jesus and his disciples to that occasion is what sealed the destiny of Christendom in perpetuating within itself the *Geist* of Judaism as a religion of alienation and slavery. The historical hiatus of Jesus' time, nevertheless, contained the possibility of transcending the Jewish *Geist* and *Schicksal*, but that possibility was ultimately forfeited. In terms of Jesus himself, it was forfeited partly because of what Hegel calls "the accidental element which was present in Jesus' mode of speaking and acting," and partly because of his fateful, even if courageous, choice to turn "polemical" toward his enemies and to remain passive toward the State.⁷⁵ In terms of the disciples,

it was forfeited due to their deficient spirituality in construing Jesus as a divine teacher under whose authority they were to live as spiritual slaves a clear hangover of the legalistic and authoritarian Jewish *Geist* which they inherited. They had inherited the "pride of servitude."⁷⁶ Thus, Hegel writes in the "Positivity" essay,

He broadened their horizon a little, but not beyond every Jewish ideal and prejudice. Lacking any great store of spiritual energy of their own, they had found the basis of their conviction about the teaching of Jesus principally in their friendship with him and dependence on him. They had not attained truth and freedom by their own exertions.

. . . Their ambition was to keep this doctrine faithfully and to transmit it equally faithfully to others without any addition, without letting it acquire any variations in detail by working on it themselves.⁷⁷

Hegel then notes the laudable attitude of the disciples of Socrates as contrasted with the lamentable response of Jesus' disciples.

"They loved

Socrates because of his virtue and his philosophy, not virtue and philosophy because of him." 78 This much is clear for Hegel:

It was not Jesus himself who elevated his religious doctrine into a peculiar sect distinguished by practices of its own; this result depended on the zeal of his friends, on the manner in which they construed his doctrine, on the form in which they preached and propagated it, on the claims they made for it, and on the arguments by which they sought to uphold it.⁷⁹

At the outset, then, the fundamental error of the disciples was to deny the self-legislating power of the innate moral reason. This was a contradiction of what Jesus himself taught. "He urged not a virtue grounded on authority. . .but a free virtue."⁸⁰ For Hegel the historian this fundamental error, embellished by the apologetic form of a supernaturalist "objectivism" in its doctrine of God, not only explained the reason for the character of German doctrinal orthodoxy in the Protestant and Catholic forms of his day, but also the reason why Christianity conquered the "beautiful" paganism of the Greeks after the Roman conquest. Christianity as it inherited the Jewish *Geist* was a religion especially suited for slaves!

Greek and Roman religion was a religion for free peoples only, and with the loss of freedom, its significance and strength, its fitness to man's needs, were also bound to perish. . . . As free men the Greeks and Romans obeyed laws laid down by themselves, obeyed men whom they themselves had appointed to office, waged wars on which they themselves had decided, gave their property, exhausted their passions, and sacrificed their lives by thousands for an end which was their own. They neither learned nor taught [a moral system] but evinced by their actions the moral maxims they could call their very own. In public as in private and domestic life, every individual was a free man, one who lived by his own laws. The Idea [Idee] of his

country or of his state was the invisible and higher reality for which he strove, which impelled him to effort; it was the final end of *his* world or in his eyes the final end of the world, an end which he found manifested in the realities of his daily life or which he himself cooperated in manifesting and maintaining.⁸¹

Thus the Christian view of God as "beyond" the world and "over against" man as the authoritarian legislator of morality, and the messianic hope for a social revolution "at the end of the world," fit well into the abject view of servile existence which came when all civil power and authority were ceded to the Roman aristocracy. Christianity won over paganism, not by virtue of its religious truth, but by virtue of its religious error! And with it the possibility of a true *Volksreligion* vanished,

the very possibility the young Hegel wished to revivify in his own day. Judea had become "the Teuton's fatherland."⁸² Beauty, heart and fancy were sent empty away. To the *Volk*, church and state stood over against them as alien yet sacrosanct monitors of a servile and unhappy existence. And the patronizing link between the two was forged by the power of economic and institutional self-interest over against the people, a people who were taught such an arrangement was the will of a Jewish God to whom all men were rightly moral and religious slaves. Such is the *Schicksal* bequeathed to Hegel's time by the failure of the disciples of Jesus to transcend the *Geist* of Judaism.

The Effect on Jesus Himself.

But even if it is true the disciples failed to understand the *religion* of Jesus for whom "the one essential was love of God and one's neighbor and being holy as God is holy," and even if "out of what Jesus said, out of what he suffered in his person they soon fashioned rules and moral commands, and free emulation of their teacher soon passed over into slavish service of their Lord,"⁸³ even so, part of the troubles and error in the present Christian religious and moral self-understanding is also traceable to a *Schicksal* growing from Jesus' own choices and mode of life as a teacher. This issue is most fully developed in the "Spirit of Christianity" essay on which we are concentrating. We need to note this because of the new christological insights which are initiated there in terms of an epistemology and metaphysics of love as related to the question of historical destiny. This new emphasis on the power and feeling of love as the fundamental spiritual character of the religious consciousness also finds expression in the "Fragment on

"Love" and the so-called "Fragment of a System," materials which emerged in Frankfurt during the same two-year period that "The Spirit of Christianity" was being written (17981800). In the epistemology and metaphysics of love developed out of his reflection on the religion of Jesus and his personal fate we find the conceptual "bridge" to Hegel's mature concepts of the historical and logical dialectic which shape the speculative conception of Absolute Spirit.

When Hegel refers to the "religion *of* Jesus," especially in the "Positivity" essay, the genitive "of" is sometimes subjective and sometimes objective in its intention. In the former case, in the 1800 revision of the essay, Hegel says, "We can see that the religion that Jesus carried in his own heart was free from the spirit of his people." In the religion of *Jesus himself*, subjectively experienced and affirmed, "the soul of Jesus was free from dependence on accidental trivialities; the one essential was love of God and one's neighbor and being holy as God is holy." He adds,

"This religious purity is of course extremely remarkable in a Jew"!

84 In the early 1795 draft he wrote that

Jesus . . . was free from the contagious sickness of his age and his people; free from inherited inertia which expends its one activity on the common needs and conveniences of life; free too from the ambition and other desires whose satisfaction, once craved, would have compelled him to make terms with prejudice and vice. He undertook to raise religion and virtue to morality and restore to morality the freedom which is its essence.⁸⁵

In the latter "objective genitive" case, Hegel refers to the teaching of Jesus, the "shape" and "form" it took due to the historical situation into which he was thrust. Because this situation was religiously and culturally Jewish, his teaching of a pure virtue religion was necessarily linked to the positive historical "accidentals" of the context in which he carried on his ministry. The universal, we remember, will *always* be linked with such historical accidentals in the religious experience of peoples, and this is but to say that Jesus had to meet his contemporaries "where they lived." The accidentals which "shaped" the manner and content of Jesus' teaching were in part the alienated *Geist* of Judaism which infected the minds of his hearers, a *Geist* he sought vainly, though gallantly, to correct; and in part the personal and polemical response he chose to make in the face of the Jews' rejection of his teaching. These were what Hegel called the "inducements" to Christianity's "becoming [negatively] positive."⁸⁶

These "accidental" inducements present to Jesus were the *occasion* of Christianity's subsequent fate, and the mode of Jesus' own teaching and actions in communicating his religious concerns indirectly contributed to the final form of positivity characterizing

the Christian religion. I say *indirectly* because Hegel clearly acknowledges that Jesus' partial accommodation to the Jewish *Geist* set up the fate of the negative positivity which developed after him. For example, "Jesus was compelled for his own purpose to speak a great deal about his own personality." The immaturity of his hearers due to the Jewish "pride" of servitude required that at least at the outset.

A teacher who intended to effect more for his people than the transmission of a new commentary on these [religiously authoritarian] commands [restricted solely to the study of textual sources] and who wished to convince them of the inadequacy of a statutory ecclesiastical faith must of necessity base his assertions on like authority. To propose to appeal to reason alone would have meant the same thing as preaching to fish, because the Jews had no means of apprehending a challenge of that kind.⁸⁷

Hence,

Jesus was also bound continually to bring himself, the teacher of religion, into play; he had to demand faith in his person, a faith which his virtue religion required only for its opposition to the positive doctrines [of Judaism]. 88

To the extent that Jesus did this, he contributed indirectly to a christocentrism where he became another form of Jewish "Lord and Master" for weak-minded and immature disciples.

The same is true of Jesus' accommodation to Jewish messianic hopes about one who was to be "Jehovah's plenipotentiary." "Jesus could not exactly contradict them," Hegel says, "but he tried to lead their messianic hopes into the moral realm and dated his appearance in his glory at a time after his death."⁸⁹ Thus, the "otherworldly" view of a Christian view of history was born in Jesus' accommodation to the Jewish *Geist* of apocalypticism, and Jesus set up the disciples for this fate by the form of accommodation he gave to his teachings. He is therefore indirectly responsible for the fate come upon modern Christendom. True, the disciples *should* and *could* have distinguished essential kernel and accommodating husk, but they failed to rise to the moral level of religious perception embodied in their teacher's "positive" accommodation. Nonetheless, the present sad fate of the church is through them traceable to Jesus himself even if thus indirectly. The "soul of Jesus" was pure, but his "positive" accommodated teachings were mixed with the impurity of a historical "necessity" of Jewish form and content above which the disciples did not rise spiritually.

But there is also a point where the unhappy fate of Christianity is

directly traceable to a failure in Jesus himself. It is a failure traceable to Jesus' own polemical attitude in the face of rejection by the Jews. In the 1795 draft of the "Positivity" essay, which is the primary source for our remarks above, Hegel suggests this attitude also included an "anxiety" (*Besorgnisse*) for his personal safety.⁹⁰ This failure is manifested in the fate Jesus chose for himself in restricting himself and his disciples to a chosen community over against the "evil world." Hence, one of the accidentals which shaped Christianity into a community of an alienated "unhappy consciousness" was Jesus' own decision to withdraw from a fraternally committed engagement with those who opposed him. This withdrawal, which is a paradigm of what Hegel later calls the mark of the "beautiful soul" which spurns worldly engagement,⁹¹ was, even if understandable, fatefully tragic for Jesus himself and fatefully disastrous in the later development of Christianity. It was one of the reasons why the present fate of Christianity is such that "church and state, worship

and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action, can never dissolve into one." 92

Hegel puts the issue of Jesus' "withdrawal" from his opponents this way:

Had he entered a tie which was free on both sides, he would have been associated with the web of Jewish legalities; and in order to avoid profaning or destroying any relationship he had entered, he would have had to let himself be entangled in the threads of that web. The result was that he could find freedom only in the void [Leere].93

Hegel seems to suggest that this withdrawal was, historically speaking, a kind of tragic necessity, the "inevitable slip" of a beautiful soul, similar to the experience of Greek religion in history. The necessity lay in the fact that "because of the impurity of [Jewish] life, Jesus could only carry the Kingdom of God in his heart."⁹⁴ Yet the tragedy, morally speaking, was the dialectical fact that guilt was the inevitable consequence of the motive of moral innocence. Beauty of soul has as its negative attribute the highest freedom, i.e.,

the potentiality of renouncing everything in order to maintain one's self. . . . Hence supreme guilt is compatible with supreme innocence; the supreme wretchedest fate with elevation above all fate.⁹⁵

This attitude of the beautiful soul consists in a kind of *courageous passivity*! With such an attitude,

by himself setting an absolutely total fate over against himself, the man has *eo ipso* lifted himself above fate entirely. Life has become untrue to him, but not he to life. He has fled from life but done no injury to it. He may long for it as an absent friend, but it cannot pursue him like an enemy. On no side is he vulnerable; like a

sensitive plant, he withdraws into himself when touched. . . . By giving up its right, as its hostile fate, to the evil genius of the other, the heart reconciles itself with him, and thereby has won just so much for itself in the field of life, has made friendly just so much life as was hostile to it, has reconciled the divine to itself; and the fate it had aroused against itself by its own deed has dissolved into the airs of night.⁹⁶

But this virtuous reconciliation of the beautiful soul is in the *ideal* realm only. Though the negative power of fate has "dissolved" into the reconciled existential experience of *inwardly* accepting a fate *over-against*, but not *above* such a person (because the choice and hence the guilt is *self* chosen), nonetheless, the *historical* experience remains "broken." Inward personal transcendence may have been gained, but the outward

world of factual cultural history remains a contradictionJesus and "the world" remain enemies. There was inward passive but not outward active reconciliation, and Hegel suggests that given the Jewish *Geist* which infected his times Jesus was *bound* to fail. "The fate of Jesus was that he had to suffer from the fate of his people." He could either make that fate actively his own, "sacrifice his own beauty," or he could reject that fate, "but submit to a [passive] life undeveloped and without pleasure in itself." He chose the latter fate, knowing that by such a choice of unfulfilled desire for the reconciliation of *all* of life, "the truth would not [at *that* time] come alive in act and reality." 97

By this line of argument, Hegel suggests that, at least at *that* moment in Jewish history, the weight of Jewish fate in pushing Jesus into such a "no-win" moral choice *was* ineluctable and this is in keeping with his earlier statement that "Fate . . . knows no given ties, no differences of standpoint or position, no precinct of virtue."⁹⁸ That is to say, historical fate is *indifferent* to the moral question of virtue and guilt. But that is an odd conclusion for one who is also trying to argue that "occasions of fate" are not to be confused with the freely *willed* fate growing out of personal choices in response to such "givens" under the ideal of virtue. No doubt it occurred to Hegel that if the deliverances of *Jewish* fate were inexorable for Jesus and his disciples, then the deliverances of Christianity's fate are perchance *also* inexorable for his own timeespecially if the *Geist* of Judaism has become the *Geist* of Christendom. True, Jesus *taught* a religion of love where virtue consists in the struggle to unify the contradictions of life; yet, is it possible the deliverances of *historical* destiny, of life viewed *objectively*, remain not only ultimately *indifferent* to this struggle,

but also *inimical* to it? True, again, Hegel wants to suggest that Jesus came to his people "with the courage and faith of a divinely inspired man . . . possessed of a new spirit entirely [!] his own" and that in the attitude of a "pure-hearted dreamer" he "visualized the world as it was to be."⁹⁹ Yet in the end the deliverances of the Jewish *Geist* were intractable and Jesus learned this, as all "dreamers," the hard way. The indifference and hatred with which he was confronted caused in him

an ever increasing bitterness against his age and his people. . . . In his attitude to them there are no attempts to reconcile them to him, to get at their spirit; there are only violent outbreaks of bitterness against them, the laying bare of their spirit and its hostility to him.¹⁰⁰

The result of this attitude of Jesus, even though "his fight was pure and sublime because he knew the fate in its entire range and had set

himself against it," was not only a postponing of the "ideal fulfillment" of the religious consciousness, but it was also a fatefully disastrous contradiction of it. Thus,

When he and the community he founded set themselves in opposition to the corruption of their environment, the *inevitable* result was to give a consciousness of corruption both to this corruption itself and also to the spirit still *relatively* free from it, and then to set this corruption's fate at variance with itself. The struggle of the pure against the impure is a sublime sight, but it soon changes into a horrible one when holiness itself is impaired by unholiness, and when an amalgamation of the two, with the pretension of being pure, rages against fate, because holiness itself is *caught in fate* and *subject to it*.

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The last sentence is the "bridge" for Hegel's argument that due both to Jesus' own personal "bitterness" and "anxiety" in choosing the route of withdrawal, and to the church's failure to recognize the historically necessary (fateful?) "one-sidedness" of Jesus' religious vision required by the infection of the Jewish *Geist* present in his hearers, the *present* state of Christendom has maintained a spirit of alienation toward "natural feelings" and "the world" of human history and culture. But in setting up the discussion of fate the way he did, the momentous question of the grounds of hope for transforming *present human history*, a history which exists under the "inevitable" deliverances of a past fate, is left hanging in anxious ambiguity, if not contradiction. Specifically, the issue as to whether or not Christianity *could ever* become an authentic *public Volksreligion* is thereby subject to increasing doubt. When Hegel contrasts the sublime quality of Jesus' religious vision with the attitude of his Jewish listeners by suggesting that "The lion has no

room in a nest, the infinite spirit none in the prison of a Jewish soul, the whole of life none in a withering leaf,"¹⁰² and then notes that the church is itself heir to this same Jewish spirit, one understands perhaps a bit better why he eventually ends this essay with the pessimistic assertion that the fate of Christianity is that "church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action can never dissolve into one."¹⁰³

The Effect on the Earliest Community

Yet, in true dialectical fashion, Hegel retains some hope for the present in spite of the logical problems posed by the question of the inexorability of historical destiny as it relates to human moral responsibility and freedom of choice. The positive side of this negative withdrawal of Jesus and the community from the world under the deliverances of their fate, is that a community was formed in the "bond of love." By this Hegel means that in turning away

from the "alien" world, the members of the early Christian community turned toward one another in a mutuality of concern for the perpetuation of their shared faith over against that alien world. The beneficial side of this loving concern was that the community was aware that its unity was rooted in a reality beyond itself as a collection of individuals and a reality to which it owed its existence as a community. This was its authentic religious "urge" or impetus.¹⁰⁴ Yet, this love, according to Hegel, was deficient in several respects.

First of all, it was a love of *their* mutual love as a separated and exclusive community. To put it another way, it was a love of their historically unique and separated community, and not a love of the God who was the true *life* of the community, as well as the animating life of the *world*. "To love God," Hegel says in interpreting Jesus' great commandment, "is to feel one's self in the 'all' of life, with no restrictions, in the infinite."¹⁰⁵ Love is a "feeling" of reconciliation and liberation in the face of life's apparent contradictions,¹⁰⁶ and this religious feeling has as its "object" the God who is the living and animating unity *behind* or *above* all such apparent contradictions. Hegel put it this way in the so-called "Fragment of a System" written during this same period: "Life is the union of union and non-union."¹⁰⁷ And God is the ontological principle of this life, "a reality beyond all reflection,"¹⁰⁸ a reality which is Spirit "beyond" all finite multiplicities and opposites.

We may call infinite life a spirit in contrast with the abstract multiplicity [of the manifold of ordinary perception and reflection], for spirit is the living unity of the manifold. . . . When man takes this animated manifold as a multiplicity of many individuals, yet as

connected with the animating spirit, then these simple lives become organs, and the infinite whole becomes an infinite totality of life. When he takes the infinite life as the spirit of the whole and at the same time as a living [being] outside himself (since he himself is restricted), and when he puts himself at the same time outside his restricted self in rising toward the living being and intimately unites himself with it, then he worships God.¹⁰⁹

All authentic religious experience and knowing is therefore the "elevation" (Erhebung) of man to God in worshipful *feeling*, not simply or essentially a reflectively *rational* "elevation." Rather, "finite *life* rises to infinite *life*."¹¹⁰ The vehicle for *this* sort of rise is the imagination (Phantasie) and we shall say more about this below.

Now these emerging convictions of the young Hegel on the reality of God and our manner and means of knowing him point decisively to the dialectical conception of God as Absolute Spirit in the later system, but our main point to be made here is that this is clearly not a conception manageable by a community living off a sense of antithesis between

themselves and the world. Life for them was "divided" and "bracketed" as a "separate" community over-against the world. The spirit of *their* community was the object of their love and not the infinite Spirit of God, for "In the God of the world *all* beings are united; in him there are no members, as members of a [particular] community. . . . the Godhead of the *world* is not the manifestation of *their* love, of *their* divinity." 111 And Hegel asserts that in spite of the "inevitable" destiny which befell Jesus the man and forced him to accommodate his religious teaching to the given *Geist* of Judaism, and in spite of his personal "bitterness" which affected his later teachingsyes, in spite of these accidentals, "Jesus' need for religion was satisfied in the God of the *whole*."¹¹² Once again it seems Hegel wants to rescue Jesus from the errors which emerged in the disciples, errors of interpretation and doctrine, by stressing that the essence of his own inward religious perceptions were true, while allowing that *some* of his direct actions and teachings were inconsistent with those perceptions. Yet it is quite clear that the reason why the "divided" mind of the church about worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action can perhaps never "dissolve into one" is in part at least a *direct* result of Jesus' own personal failure in setting himself bitterly over-against the "world."

That the community's "bond of love" was deficient was due, then, in part, to this personal failure. The alleged *relative historical necessity* for a separated community arising out of the *Jews'* rejection of Jesus and *his* rejection of them was now interpreted as an *absolute religious necessity* for the remainder of the church's existence. In this way, Jesus remained for the young Hegel a tragic figureguilty, yet innocent. But as we saw earlier Hegel suggests in a separate fragment that "Jesus died in the confidence that his plan

would not miscarry."¹¹³ "His plan" I take to mean his concern to see love for the God of the *world* triumph over all religious particularisms including that Jewish particularism which still infected the church. "His plan" involved *hope* in the Kingdom of God, for as Hegel saw it, "In the Kingdom of God what is common to all is life in God," and this Kingdom is

love, a living bond which unites believers. It is this feeling of the unity of life in which all the contradictions characterized by hostilities . . . are annulled [aufgehoben].¹¹⁴

As if to identify himself with Jesus in a *continuing* hope for this Kingdom, Hegel adds,

Is there an idea more beautiful than that of a nation (*Volk*) of men related to one another by love? Is there one more uplifting than that of belonging to a

whole which as a whole, as one, is the spirit of God whose sons the individual members are? 115

Clearly, he believed there *was* no more beautiful idea than this. And maybe the key to understanding how both hope and despair dwelt side by side in the struggling young Hegel here is to say that though *Christendom* as institutionalized in the Western world was perhaps beginning to look irreformable, a return to the *religion of Jesus*, the religion of a Kingdom of love, was still considered a historical and cultural possibility. In any case, the dialectical religious metaphysics of Spirit as Life and Love emerging here clearly provided the seeds for his later philosophical system of the Absolute as Spirit.

A second reason why the "bonds of love" were deficient in the early Christian community is that it continued to focus its worshipful attention on the historical "individuality" of Jesus after his death. Hegel recognized, of course, that since the community's religious faith had begun with the clearly human, historical presence of the earthly Jesus, this memory-image would necessarily continue to mold the community's religious self-understanding. Before his death, "their religion, their faith in pure life, had hung on the individual Jesus. He was their living bond; in him the divine had taken shape and been revealed."¹¹⁶ In a historical religion there is nothing scandalous in this, for restating the point made earlier about the legitimacy of a *positive* "positivity" in appreciating the origins of human religion, Hegel notes, "If the divine is to appear, the invisible spirit must be united with something visible so that the whole may be unified . . . , so that knowing and feeling may be one, so that there may be a complete

synthesis, a perfected harmony." Without such a linkage of the divine and human in concrete *life* and *history*, "there remains the quenchless thirst after God."¹¹⁷ The earthly Jesus, in fact and in memory, was therefore necessarily and understandably central to the Christian community's religious life and self-understanding.

But *how* so, or better, how so *appropriately* as Hegel saw it? The "natural" memory, similar to that of ordinary friends who die, would be that of one who was "the image of purer manhood."¹¹⁸ But this ideal "spirit" of purer manhood, as the memory of one who had "vanished," would exist as an "antithesis" over against the present. "The presence of this spirit to fancy [Phantasie] would always have been linked with a longing which would have denoted only the *need* for religion; the group would still have found no God of its own,"¹¹⁹ i.e., a God immediately present as the reality grounding their own *life*.

With the resurrection this need was, or *could* have been, met for the community. The image [Bild] of "purer manhood," experienced only as

memory, lacked life, had no present shape and power experienced as "divinity present" in the community's life.

But in the risen Jesus . . . the image found life again, and love found the objectification of its oneness. In this remarriage of spirit and body the opposition between the living and dead Jesus has vanished, and the two are united in God. Love's longing has now found itself as a living being [or reality] and can now enjoy itself, and worship of this being is now the religion of the group. The need for religion finds its satisfaction in the risen Jesus, in love thus given shape. 120

"Love given shape" [gestaltete Liebe] that is the key to Hegel's christological concept of the meaning of the resurrection here. It is also the key to understanding the meaning of Jesus' earthly life and message once the historical "accidentals" are stripped away. Jesus is divine, for Hegel, not in terms of any metaphysical uniqueness, but in terms of the ideal "image" of the creative unity of the divine and human at the level of spirit which the totality of his life and teachings represents. To put it in my own terms, Jesus' life as a whole was the historical *symbol* of the religiously intuited ontological principle of life and love in its creative and reconciling power within *all* human life and culture. The resurrected Jesus was and is "configurated love in its beauty,"¹²¹ love given shape in the *Gefühl* and *Phantasie* of the community. Or at least, he *should* be if we are to understand the resurrection correctly from the *new* standpoint of true religious consciousness Hegel is here advocating. Hegel is quite clear that

To consider the resurrection of Jesus as an event is to adopt the outlook of the historian, and this has nothing to do with religion. Belief or disbelief in the resurrection as a mere fact deprived of its religious interest is a matter for the intellect whose occupation (the

fixation of objectivity) is just the death of religion, and to have recourse to the intellect means to abstract from religion.¹²²

It is the *gegenwärtiger Christi* which is of primary concern to Hegel here, the eternal Christ-spirit of "love configurated" as distinct from the man Jesus understood solely in his historical particularity. Hegel is here trying to struggle across Lessing's "ugly ditch." He is trying to bridge the ditch by finding the universal truth in the concrete historical contingencies of Jesus' human life. But the bridge is not a matter of "objective" reflection, but of "feeling," the feeling of love. True religious feeling, or, if you please, authentic spiritual intuition, sees in Jesus' life, and especially the resurrection, a "configuration [Gestalt] proper to

God," i.e., "the presentation [Darstellung] of the love uniting the group," a love which is ideally an experience of the love of God.¹²³ But in order not to deny the *historical* basis of the originating event of Jesus himself in the life of the community, Hegel recognizes that "the objective aspect" by means of which God is present to the religious intuition involves an empirical mediation by a particular event which exists on its own account and so "lays claim to a place in the world of realities [Wirklichkeiten]."¹²⁴ The purely *empirical* aspect of this mediating event, however, is the place where the historian and *Verstand* operate, and the religious interest must, and *can*, pass through this purely empirical aspect to the religious meaning of the event as "love configurated." And the way to this meaning is through "feeling" [Gefühl], not through the "understanding" [Verstand].¹²⁵ The truth of the eternal is indeed *linked* to the historical, but it is not an "historical truth."

The Christian community over the years, however, has not successfully negotiated this passage from historical fact to religious meaning. It has "hovered" between the "objective" spiritual understanding of the resurrection where God is seen as revealed *in* Jesus and an "objective" historical understanding where Jesus is said to *be* God. The latter view is the "monstrous combination" [ungeheure Verbindung] of ideas over which "for so many centuries millions of God-seeking souls have fought and tormented themselves."¹²⁶ This view grotesquely divinized the individual man Jesus, and as a consequence the view of the risen one as deity and man produced a passion to argue the resurrection as something historically "objective" in time and space and therefore subject to the investigatory canons of a purely empirical verification by the understanding. The true divinity of Jesus as "love configurated" is

thus confused with historical concerns about the facts of his human individuality. In a classic figure of speech Hegel argues that this way of understanding Jesus as the risen one transforms his true religious significance into just one more "mundane reality." His objective historical individuality (and all the *Zufälligkeiten* which characterized him in this individuality) hangs, he says, "like lead . . . drawing him down to earth."¹²⁷ "The veil stripped off in the grave," he adds, "the real human form, has risen again out of the grave and attached itself to the one who is risen as God." "This sad need," he continues, "which the Christian group felt for a mundane reality is deeply connected with its spirit and its fate."¹²⁸ How so?

The Spirit and Fate of Christianity.

In its religious spirit and its historical life the Christian church remains not fully reconciled to God because of a divided, hence "unhappy" consciousness. Its religious spirit

did recognize the love between its members as having been given shape by the risen Christ, but this love was parochial, and as parochial, required criteria "other" than love "pure and simple," love as free and spontaneous and rooted in God's reconciling presence *alone*. Factual realities were required to sustain and norm it. These factual realities were "the similarity of having adopted a doctrine, having had a common master and teacher." 129

Christianity became thus a "community of dependence"¹³⁰ dependent at the level of intellect on "positive" facts of a remembered founder who, as divine, remained "other" and "over-against" them as a master to whom they were to remain obedient slaves, just as the God of Israel had been understood by Judaism. The positive "positivities" of the originating event of the individual man, Jesus, became negative "positivities" in the infrasectarian and authoritarian spirit of the church as it was driven by the passion for doctrinal orthodoxy. Needing such "objective" factual realities to sustain and norm its communal life, it developed an alienated or "split" religious consciousness and life. In the reduction of the truth of Christianity to the level of *Verstand* by focusing on supposedly supernaturally produced factual miracles of the past, without knowledge about which reconciliation to God was not possible, a split in the religious consciousness was posited between the object to be believed (i.e., Jesus as the God-man and the facts of his historical existence some 2000 years ago) and the subject who is to believe. The object and the subject remain strictly "other," with the subject wholly dependent on the object, i.e., in "bondage" to it. Since Jesus as the object of such knowledge was divine, the divine in their religious consciousness remained also "other" to them.

Likewise, this alienation at the level of religious *consciousness* is reproduced in *life*. By forming its religious consciousness as dependent on historical "accidentals" belonging to a particular series of events in time past, one of which was Jesus' "fateful" conflict with the Jews and his subsequent withdrawal from worldly affairs in general, the church conceived its mission forever to remain utterly separate from "the world."

In both cases, then, the church was ambivalently preoccupied with "mundane realities." At the level of its religious consciousness, it *required* them as historical "objects" to norm its understanding of the divine. At the level of its religious life, it *spurned* them in the form of an "other-worldly" attitude which devalued man's larger cultural responsibilities in history and, as well, his enjoyment of "this-worldly" life in general. In both this positive and negative preoccupation, the church took on the character of an *Entgegensezung* form of consciousness and life, an unhappy consciousness and an unhappy life. This is its fate as a historical community. Given this character and this fate, the *Volk-*

serzieher concluded in the 1800 final draft of this essay that for Christianity as institutionally inherited by the West, in both its Protestant and Catholic forms, "church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action can never be fused into one." 131

The Transition from *Volkserzieher* to Philosopher: The Passion for Unity

"Fusing into one," the passion for the unification of opposites, was the driving concern of Hegel the young *Volkserzieher*, both on the plane of reflection and on the plane of life. On both planes the young Hegel was at an impasse. Kant's philosophy failed Hegel because of its dualistic "philosophy of limits" which produced not only a radical split between the theoretical and practical functions of reason, but also a split between the religio-ethical consciousness of man and his pathological or feeling consciousness within practical reason itself. And, of course, even theoretical reason was split in itself because knowledge of the infinite by the finite was only indirectly and negatively postulational, not directly and positively assertive. Kant's philosophy suffered from a defective concept of *living* human nature in its unifying functions.

In religion, *true* religion, these only apparent antitheses are sublated (*aufgehoben*) in worship. This is the young Hegel's conclusion under the impact of the Greek ideal. The "elevation" of finite life to infinite life is the "essence of worship" in its contemplative and cultic forms, but this elevation is not an act of the abstractive intellect (*Verstand*) or even of postulational reason (*Vernunft*): it is a response *to* the infinite, moved *by* the infinite, at the level of feeling, imagination and the heart (*Gefühl, Phantasie*

and Herz). Hence when Hegel, in the essay Nohl badly misnames "Fragment of a System from 1800," says that "Philosophy must stop short of religion" because it is a process of thinking, which as such a process, "implies an opposition with non-thinking [processes] as well as the opposition between the thinking mind and the object of thought," one must understand he means philosophy of a *Kantian* sort.¹³²

Hegel was seeking the reconciliation of understanding with life, which is what Hutchinson Stirling calls "the secret of Hegel."¹³³ But understanding as *Verstand* and reason as *Vernunft* had not yet been sharply distinguished for the young Hegel in their philosophical functions as related to religion. Hegel agreed that analytic and postulational philosophical reflection of a Kantian sort *did* and *must* fall short of religion, because religion was not *that sort* of understanding. It is a *different* sort,

one more intuitive and immediate, with a "logic" of its own, the logic of *living* processes in their unifying activity. "Life," he says in this essay, "is the union of union and non-union," and life as such is "beyond all reflection."¹³⁴ What is true of living *finite* creatures is true of the *infinite* reality called God. God is Life, the unifying living principle or Spirit of all the finite multiplicities in existence. And he, too, is "beyond all reflection" of a purely Kantian sort. Harris is clearly correct when he suggests that what Hegel *later* called "philosophy," his own mature system based on reinterpretation of the powers and function of *Vernunft*, "grows out of what was called 'religion' before."¹³⁵ If one does not understand this, then Hegel's later system, to use his own metaphor, will look as if it were "shot from a pistol." At this point Hegel is still struggling to find a way to unity between understanding and life, reason and experience. But the seeds are here for the doctrine of Absolute Spirit as *Subject* in his developing conception of *Life* as a creative process where the antitheses of existence are sublated (*aufgehoben*), transcended and yet preserved in the unity which is God himself. As yet, the *Volkerzieher* was unclear how to proceed with a "system" adequate to his philosophical intuitions. As he wrote to Schelling in 1800, "the ideal of my youth," which I understand to be that of becoming a philosophical historian of humanity in order to gain perspective on his task as a *Volkserzieher*, "had to be transformed at the same time into reflective form, into a system." He was, he said, "still occupied with this,"¹³⁶ and he felt the impasse on the plane of reflection keenly. Religion, and specifically the religion of Jesus (his teaching about God as Love), but not *about* him (as developed in orthodox Christianity and its institutionalized forms), seemed somehow to

him to point the way beyond the impasse. He was not yet fully clear about how this insight might find "systematic" speculative articulation.

On the plane of life the *Volkserzieher* was no less at an impasse with regard to his earlier aspirations. The political developments in Germany had issued in the fragmentation of Germany. As we noted earlier, in 1801 he wrote in the *Verfassungsschrift*, "Germany is no longer a state."¹³⁷ The failures to produce solid political progress on constitutional reforms and toward German unification, the war with France and the failure of hopes to see Germany united under French sovereignty, the continuing alienation between the Protestant and Catholic German states, together with the growing conviction that, owing to its historical miscarriage of understanding about the religion of Jesus, Christianity as an institutionalized religion was not reformable for the purpose of a *Volksreligion* on the Greek order all this made the young Hegel aware of how seemingly irreconcilable were the ideal philosophical *oughts*

about the relation of religion and culture, and the brute *facts* of a fractured historical existence. In the famous 1800 letter to Schelling we have quoted before, Hegel, given his laborious intellectual struggles from 1793 onward which now crystallized into the desire to transform his youthful *Volkserzieher* ideal "into a system," mused, "I ask myself now, while I am still occupied with this, how I am to find my way back to intervention in the life of men."¹³⁸ The quest for a unity between understanding and life appeared again to be in doubt on the plane of life. System-wise and culture-wise the split between essence and existence seemed perhaps unbridgeable. The Ideal and the Real were askew, if not in utter opposition. The political conundrums of the time had left the concrete question of the fulfillment of the third canon for an authentic *Volksreligion* dangling in mid air: "It must be so constituted that all the needs of lifethe public affairs of the State are tied in with it."¹³⁹ One gets the feeling that Hegel at this point in his career experienced very deeply the awesome "power of the negative." It is hard to be a *Volkserzieher* when there is no unified *Volk* to lead. But out of such stuff of lived reflective and historical conundrums philosophers are born. As Hegel would frequently point out later, it is the power of the negative which *moves* both thought and history creatively. Right now the impasses on the plane of reflection and the plane of life remained conundrums.

At this point we take our leave of the young Hegel and the *Jugendschriften*. The search for unity in the form of a *system* was to continue during the Jena years with Schelling (18011807), culminating finally in the magnificent *Phänomenologie des Geistes* which was completed amidst the dizzying whirl of events surrounding Napoleon's invasion of Prussia in his last year there.

Much certainly remains to be written about Hegel's further philosophical development during those intervening years before the publication of the *Phenomenology*, but that is not central to our more limited and specifically christological concerns here. What has been made clearer, I trust, is just why and in what ways Hegel wrote so acrimoniously about Christianity during his years at Tübingen, Berne and Frankfurt. I have tried to show how the young Hegel sought to distinguish the religion of Jesus from the religion about him. His attempts to do so seem cavalier and self-contradictory at times, and his attitude toward Jesus as a teacher of "virtue religion" is not very convincing to those of us who live after Schweitzer's criticism of the "old quest" and the rise of the "new quest."

Yet, Hegel in these essays was moving gradually toward a new way of appropriating the significance of Jesus' life and teachings for understanding the nature of God and his reconciling presence in human life and our

cultural history all of it. God as the energizing principle of all Life, the creative living Spirit beyond, yet also within the multiplicities of finite existence, was being explored under the concept of a dialectically active reconciling divine Love. This was the religious meaning of God's love as Jesus, particularly as interpreted by John's gospel, taught it. That is as far as Hegel had now come in attempting to reassess the essential truth of the Christian religion which lies behind its "positive" forms. When the ontology of this Life and Love was explored in the later system, Hegel gave much more dramatic focus to the speculative symbolic significance of the traditional doctrines of the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection all of which, as interpreted by orthodox theologians, bothered Hegel so much in "The Spirit of Christianity." These early negative "stumbling blocks" in his thinking later became positive "stepping stones" to a new vision of reality.

The christology of the *Jugendschriften* was largely christomorphic it saw Jesus as one whose religious attitude was simply to be imitated, but clearly not one to be worshipped as God or to be slavishly obeyed as one's religious "Master." The christology of the mature writings, of the speculative system, is, by contrast, dominantly christomystic it understands the crucial events of Jesus' life as interpreted by the faith of the church, especially the doctrines of the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection, as symbolic paradigms or *Vorstellungen* which represent the central "moments" in the dialectical ontological relationship of the finite and the infinite. These mythically symbolic *Vorstellungen* point to the speculative *meaning* of that relationship. They provide the hermeneutic key for understanding the development of human cultural history and for developing a true and systematic knowledge

of God which is to say, for the mature Hegel, they provide the key to a true philosophy.

The intellectual alchemy which transformed Hegel's christomorphic christology of the *Jugendschriften* into the speculative christomythic categories of his later system really cannot be *fully* explained, for it is indeed quite a decisive move from his early attacks on the creedal forms of orthodox Christianity to his later statement that his own philosophy was "orthodox *par excellence*." 140 Yet it is clear from our study of the *Jugendschriften* that the move was much more of a continuous *development* than an abrupt *lurch*, as many critics have alleged. The next three chapters will be devoted to investigating where this development finally landed him in the christological conceptions of his mature system. We shall do this by noting how his christological convictions and his views on the nature of religion, the meaning of history, and the possibility of a "final" speculative philosophy are systematically related and mutually determined.

Chapter 2

Christology and Religion: The Religious Context of Christological Interpretation

All peoples know that the religious consciousness is that wherein they possess truth, and they have always regarded religion as their dignity and the Sabbath of their life. 1

The philosophy of religion has to discover the logical necessity in the progress by which the Being, known as the Absolute, assumes fuller and firmer features; it has to note to what particular feature the kind of cultus corresponds and then to see how the secular self-consciousness, the consciousness of what is the supreme vocation of man in short how the nature of a nation's moral life, the principle of its law, of its actual liberty, and of its constitution, as well as of its art and science, corresponds to the principle which constitutes the substance of a religion. 2

The purpose of the next two chapters is to explore the relationship which exists between Hegel's general interpretation of religion as a universal human phenomenon and his interpretation of the peculiar religious significance of the Christ event.³ The problem to be discussed might be more precisely stated as follows: In what sense is it proper to say that Hegel's christological interpretation is a function of his general theory of religion, and in what sense is it proper to say his general theory of religion is a function of his christological interpretation? By stating the issue in this way we are implying that there is *some* sense in which both of these reciprocal functions must be affirmed if one is true to Hegel's views. Our problem will be to discover the systematic rubric intrinsic to

Hegel's own thought by which the issue thus posed may be resolved and clarified.

We shall proceed in the following manner. *First*, we shall present an analysis of Hegel's general theory of religion in terms of its theoretical, or reflective, characteristics and its cultural, or practical, manifestations. To put it in the terms H. S. Harris provided for us in the last chapter, we want to discover how the mature Hegel understood religion on the "plane of reflection" and on the "plane of life." ⁴ In this present chapter our particular concern will be to uncover the central categories of the philosophical anthropology in terms of which his christological interpretation is later developed. This discussion will enable us to ascertain in what sense it is proper to say that his christological interpretation is a function of his general theory of religion.

Second, in the chapter to follow we shall analyze Hegel's presentation of Christianity as the "absolute," "final," and "revealed" religion in terms of the categories of his general theory developed in this chapter. We shall also assess his philosophical interpretation of the specific theological categories characteristic of the Christian faith. In that chapter we will note how Hegel's interpretation of the universal significance of the Christ event connects with this general theory of religion by means of the distinction between implicit and explicit religious comprehension developed in history. We will note how the *Begriff* of religion is said to be "fulfilled" in the Christ event and how this fulfillment provides the criteria for developing a speculative philosophy of religion and a critical history of religion. That discussion, then, will enable us to ascertain in what sense it is proper to say that Hegel's general theory of religion is a function of his christological interpretation.

In speaking of Hegel's general theory of religion we refer to his descriptive analysis of religion as a human phenomenon in terms of its theoretical, or reflective, characteristics and its practical, or cultural, manifestations.⁵ "What scientific knowledge [Erkenntnis] ought to do," he says, "is to recognize religion as something which already exists [die da ist]."⁶ Such knowledge has no interest in promoting religion or in being "edifying."⁶ Its task is to discover and describe that peculiar "necessity" in the human self-consciousness whereby the "advance from the other modes of its will in conceiving and feeling to this absolute mode" is accomplished.⁷ Religion is a "fact" there to be accounted for.

Religion, however, is not simply one fact among other equally significant facts which characterize distinctively human existence. It is the fundamental and uniquely significant fact which characterizes the concrete life of the human spirit.⁸ Other facts characteristic of human life achieve their "significance" as functions or modes of this most fundamental characteristic. Man *qua* human is "essentially" religious. Even granted that human freedom is of such a nature that "the self-will [Willkür], perver-

sity or indolence of individuals may interfere with the [religious] necessity of their universal spiritual nature," and that "individuals may deviate from it, and attempt to get for themselves a standpoint of their own [as non- or anti-religious], and hold it," it nonetheless remains true that man *qua man* is, by the inescapable impulse of his whole nature, "essentially" religious.

The fact is . . . no man is so utterly ruined, so lost, and so bad, nor can we regard anyone as being so wretched, that he has no religion whatever in him, even if it were only that he has the fear of it, or some yearning after it, or a feeling of hatred towards it. For even in this last case he is inwardly occupied with it, and cannot free himself from it. As man, religion is essential to him, and is not an experience [Empfindung] alien to him. 9

One therefore may say that for Hegel man is fundamentally *homo religiosus*, that is, religion is that mode of human experience in which the distinctive characteristics which make man *man* are manifest, where the ultimate truth of his personal being and meaning is disclosed.

Speaking from a theoretical or reflective point of view, Hegel's position is that when man is properly understood as the essentially religious being, we are thereby necessarily led to an understanding of the ultimate ground of his being by which the possibilities and limitations of his existence are to be defined, the ultimate criterion by which his conception of truth is to be formed, and the ultimate standard of value by which his actions are to be determined. Thus, he says, in religion "man passes over into the region of absolute truth"¹⁰ that is, into a consideration of the reality and nature of God as the ground of all being, truth and value.¹¹ "The object of religion as well as philosophy," he tells us, "is eternal truth in its

own objectivity, God and nothing but God, and the explication of God."¹² Or, as he elsewhere puts it, "Religion itself is the knowledge [Wissen] of God. The explication of this knowledge, which is mediated, is the explication of religion itself."¹³ Further, since "religion *per se* contains essentially the relation of man to God,"¹⁴ man may be said to know himself truly only as he knows himself in relation to God.

Religion for Hegel is inextricably connected with the fact that man is a *thinking* being. One may even say that man is a religious being *because* he is a thinking being. "It is thinking man and he alone who has religion; an animal has none because it does not think."¹⁵ Further, he writes, "Religion as the innermost concern of man has therein [i.e., the region of thinking] the central point and root of its quickening power," and this is so, he says, because "God is in his own essence thought, thinking it-

self." 16 It is in terms of his rationality that Hegel understands man to bear the *imago dei*.

Man is exalted above everything in the entire creation. He is the being who knows, apprehends, thinks [er ist das Wissende, Erkennende, Denkende]. He is the image of God in a sense quite other than that which may be said of the world. What is expressed in religion is God, who is thought [Gedanke], and God is worshipped only in thought.¹⁷

Any description of Hegel's general theory of religion, therefore, must take careful note of the way in which he understands the theoretical or reflective structures which characterize man's thinking self- The cultural, or practical, manifestations of religion, however, must also be considered. And this must be done from two perspectives; one, in terms of the specific cultic life of a religious community, and the other, in terms of the general secular activity of man, or as Hegel often calls it, man's "worldly pursuits."¹⁸ Nothing could be further from Hegel's mind, however, than to presume that in man's nature thinking and acting are distinct and unrelated functions. No, in fact he affirms, "The true being of man is, on the contrary, his act . . . the individual human being *is* what the *act is*."¹⁹ The truth is that man thinks when he acts and acts in conformity to the way he thinks. His acts disclose and embody his thinking nature.

Thus, when Hegel sets forth his general theory of religion he assumes that there is an explicit correlation between the theoretical characteristics of religion as intrinsic to the functions of a human self-consciousness and its practical aspects as embodied in various forms of cultic worship and cultural activity. That, in fact, is the

fundamental presupposition of his own speculative philosophy of religion.

The philosophy of religion has to pay attention to the logical necessity in the development of the definitions of the Being known as the Absolute. It has to pay attention, in the first place, to what characteristic [of the Absolute] the type of cultus corresponds; it has to note, further, how the secular self-consciousness the consciousness concerning that which is the highest vocation of man, and along with that, the nature of a nation's moral life, the principle of its law, of its actual liberty and its constitution, as well as its art and science to note how, to repeat, this secular self-consciousness corresponds to the principle which constitutes the substance of a religion. That all these factors belonging to the actuality of a nation constitute one systematic totality, and that one Spirit creates and develops it this is the insight which provides the basis for the further judgment that the history of religions coincides with world history.²⁰

Our concern is not at this point to comment on Hegel's philosophy of religion and its relation to a philosophy of world history, but rather to discover how he develops a general theory of religion on the basis of a description of its theoretical and practical characteristics. The passage quoted above, however, indicates clearly the close link he saw between the two. If it is possible for the purposes of our analysis to separate religion in the form of reflective thought from religion in the form of practical activity, we must recognize that for Hegel these functions were not separated or separable in lived experience.

The Theoretical Characteristics of Religion

We begin our consideration of Hegel's general theory of religion with a discussion of its theoretical forms because, if, as we noted above, man is said to be "essentially" religious, it is important to clarify just how this conviction is linked to his further assertion that man "is essentially the being who thinks."²¹ When we begin with a discussion of the theoretical characteristics of religion, therefore, we do so to point out the important fact that it is in the reflective capacity of man that his "religious" nature first definitively manifests itself. As far as Hegel is concerned, it is not sufficient to say man thinks because he is religious; rather, one must also say that it is the thinking capacity *itself* which constitutes the fundamental *mode* of man's self-consciousness as religious: man is religious by means of his thinking capacity. To put it yet another way, in thinking, man is inescapably or "necessarily" religious. To understand the nature of man as a thinking being is to understand him *ab initio* as a religious being. In order to follow out the implications of this fundamental conviction we shall consider (a)

religion as a dialectical movement of reflective consciousness and (b) religion as a form of thinking representation.

Religion as a Dialectical Movement of Reflective Consciousness

The key Hegelian concepts here are *Erhebung* and *Übergehen*. Religion at this fundamental level may be described as the dialectical movement of thought by which man is necessarily led from a consideration of objects as finite to the infinite ground of their existence. Thus, Hegel says, "We describe religion as essentially this passing over [Übergehen] from one content to another, from the finite content to the absolute, infinite content."²² This is what he calls "the necessity" of

the religious standpoint which obtains in human consciousness. "Religion is the consciousness of the in-and-for-itself true, in contrast to sensuous finite truth and perception. Accordingly, it is the elevation [Erhebung], the reflection [Reflexion], the transition [Übergehen] from immediate, sensuous, individual things . . . a going out and going toward an Other," that is, toward God or the Infinite as the Ground of all that is finite.²³ And he tells us in another place, "this elevation [Erhebung] is the fact [Factum] in the human spirit which is religion, but only religion generally, i.e., entirely abstract; thus, this is the general, but only the general foundation [Grundlage] of the religion."²⁴ This is the sense in which Hegel can insist that "religion begins with the consciousness that there is something higher than man."²⁵ We may say, therefore, that the religious character of man as a thinking being initially manifests itself with his consciousness that the immediately apparent is not the metaphysically ultimate. That is why Hegel insists that man is "a born metaphysician."²⁶

Now it is important to note here that Hegel's "general" characterization of religion as a dialectical movement of reflective consciousness is developed out of his post-Kantian idealist premise that in reflectively following out an analysis of the transcendental conditions of human knowing one at length arrives not simply at the universal and necessary truths of the *subjective* functions of purely human reason, set over against some unknowable *surd* called "reality-in-itself," but also at the universal and necessary *objective* truth of that reality-in-itself which grounds all the finite phenomena present to consciousness. Hegel argues that the very ability of human reason to recognize and describe certain characteristics of its own functioning as explicitly particular and

finite *presupposes* the capacity of reason to speak from the standpoint of the universal and the infinite. That is to say, Hegel constantly insists over against Kant that to be aware of a limit is already to be "beyond it."²⁷ The same reason which is examined also *does* examining and Hegel thinks it arbitrary to *begin* with an implicitly skeptical premise about the power of reason when reason is in fact at the outset adjudged even by Kant capable of rendering true judgments about its own supposed limitations. The examination of knowledge can be carried out only by an act of knowledge which itself transcends the distinction between finite and infinite implicit in such knowledge. To forget such a fact and to pretend that the formal criticism of reason must first abstract from its actual use in order to achieve philosophical legitimation, is to take up the position of the scholastic, "not to venture into the water until he had learned to swim."²⁸

If one, then, cannot get outside of reason in order to "know" it, be-

cause in knowing anything even its own reason is employed, then reason can only be known "in its actual employment." By observing reason in its actual employment, Hegel believed, one soon discovers that reason "knows" by virtue of a self-mediated distinction and judgment between the finite and the infinite (or non-finite). Reason as actually employed does not "founder" on this distinction; it explicates it positively and creatively. Hegel thought Kant did not do justice to the positive implications of this self-mediating function of reason. The distinction between finite and infinite is *within* reason and constitutive of it. Only when one has a *positive* knowledge of the non-finite or infinite can one recognize the finite for what it is *as* finite. The concepts are correlative and meaningless if separated. In fact, the positive knowledge of the infinite is *logically* prior to the possibility of recognizing the finite as finite. And if the infinite is "known," it has a positive reality as "objective," though not, of course, as finite things are objective and present to sense. "The Universal [or infinite] is neither seen nor heard; its existence is only for the mind. . ." 29 The infinite is not something "beyond" us, but something present in us, present to reflective consciousness, and its "objectivity" as thus "present to consciousness" is what provides us with a *positive* standard of reference for judging what is *negatively* known as finite. To judge as to the truth and meaning of *anything* which presents itself to us in consciousness under the forms of finitude is to occupy the standpoint of the infinite and to *contrast* the *derived* reality of the finite and the *ultimate* reality of the infinite *within* that reflective consciousness. That is what truth and judgment mean and require. The power of rational judgment roots in the consciously developed distinction between finite and infinite,

and Hegel argued that a careful observation of reason "in its actual employment" will show why all philosophical agnosticism about the nature of the infinite is *ipso facto* self-contradictory.

Now the peculiar irony in Kant's position, as Hegel saw it, was that psychologically speaking man's reason could not help itself in constantly seeking for a final or "hard" metaphysical understanding of what is reality-in-itself, and yet, theoretically speaking, it was forever barred from achieving such positive cognitive understanding.³⁰ Man is left only to "yearn" for it. Theoretical reason for Kant is only the "negative faculty of the infinite,"³¹ telling us what we *cannot* know about reality-in-itself, and though practical reason is supposed to offer us positive grounds for expressing a knowledge of the infinite, the grounds remain *merely* postulational in their cognitive function. Practically speaking, one may think and act *as if* certain speculative postulates required for the sake of a consistent dutiful life are indicative of the nature of reality-in-itself. One can never *demonstrate* by the canons of *theoretical* rea-

son, however, that the postulational concepts of God, freedom and immortality actually constitute the objective truth of that strange noumenal world which obtains "behind" the phenomenal representations of finite existence. The restrictive finitude of theoretical reason is absolute for Kant.

Hegel considered such a position on the nature and limits of reason in its theoretical and practical modes arbitrary and inadequate. He felt it is arbitrary in its premises and inadequate in its conclusions. Whether he was altogether correct in this judgment we cannot here consider. 32 Fundamentally, however, Hegel simply argues it makes much more sense both philosophically and experientially to say that the transcendental principles and postulates of reason required by man in the apperceptive unity of his thinking, principles and postulates required in order to function reflectively and ethically as a creative and unified being, reveal something positive about the truth of what actually *is*, not just something negative about the peculiarity of human reason in its limited finite functions. If theoretical reason at the level of *Vernunft* necessarily requires a predication of the infinite or "unconditioned" in the form of postulates about God, freedom and immortality, then why assume arbitrarily such necessity is simply a peculiarity of our reason in its merely *subjective* function? Is not such a stubborn metaphysical skepticism about things-in-themselves, as Fichte before him had argued, only another form of "dogmatism," philosophically speaking? Why cannot one argue that objects conform to thought *because* objects are *in themselves* constituted by thought, not because thought makes something of objects or phenomena which they are *not* in themselves? If thought indeed constitutes objects, why cannot one say that objects are in

themselves constituted by thought or "reason"? And if such objects are not the products of *our* thought, our ego, but the thought of an infinite Ego, then would this not better explain how it comes about that the consideration of finite objects in their phenomenal character necessarily leads us in the *Erhebung* of our thinking to a positive consideration of their infinite and rational ground? Would it not also better explain the immediate or common-sense confidence we have in our reason to disclose to us the actual nature of things-in-themselves, to know and judge the truth of things as they *really* are in distinction from how they variously *appear* to the senses? Would it not also better explain the explicit conviction of the religious self-consciousness that man lives always and everywhere in immediate relation to God as the ultimately purposive or teleological Ground of his own personal being and meaning?

Hegel in fact proposes we assume such a point of view and he calls it "absolute" idealism in contrast to Kant's "subjective" idealism.³³ By so

doing, Hegel, in effect, performs his *own* "Copernican revolution" on the basis of Kant's idealist premises.

Now Hegel insists that "every genuine philosophy is idealism,"³⁴ for philosophy as a rational discipline has to do with thinking the universal and necessary truth of things in contrast to the finite forms of things in their presentational immediacy and transient character. To this extent every so-called realism is in principle an idealism. But idealism in philosophy insists on the fact that thought creatively and spontaneously *constitutes* the objects which are present to thought. Objects conform to thought, not vice-versa and Kant's "Copernican revolution" was dedicated to explicating how this is so or "possible."

The "I" is as it were the crucible and fire which consumes the loose plurality of sense and reduces it to unity . . . the tendency of all man's endeavors is to understand the world, to appropriate and subdue it to himself; and to this end the positive reality of the world must be as it were crushed and pounded, in other words, idealised.³⁵

Up to this point Hegel shares Kant's "idealism."

He differs from Kant in maintaining that the formative power of the reason which constitutes objects or the world in the reflective consciousness of man is a manifestation of the divine reason which constitutes the ground and teleological principle of that world of objects which presents itself initially to our sensuous consciousness as finite. That is to say, what constitutes the necessity of man's reason (*Vernunft*) in terms of which he systematically organizes and interprets the world, is in fact the same necessity of reason which constitutes the very being, the essence of the world which he interprets. Thought and being are one in their innermost principle.

The ancient saying "*nous* governs the world" means for Hegel "that reason is the soul of the world it inhabits, its immanent principle, its most proper and inward nature, its universal,"³⁶ and that "what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational."³⁷ The necessity of reason by which we cognitively organize the plurality of the world-present-to-sense as appearance is not simply a characteristic *we* impose on objects; it is matched by the necessity of reason which operates "behind" the phenomena themselves and which grounds and organizes them into a unity as it were, "out there."

The things immediately known are mere appearances in other words, the ground of their being is not in themselves but in something else. But then comes the important step of defining what that something else is. According to Kant, the things that we know about are *to us* appearances only, and we can never know their essential nature, which belongs to another world we

cannot approach. Plain minds have not unreasonably taken exception to this subjective idealism, with its reduction of the facts of consciousness to a purely personal world, created by ourselves alone. For the true statement of the case is as follows. Things of which we have direct consciousness are mere phenomena, not for us only, but in their own nature; and the true and proper case of these things, finite as they are, is to have their existence founded not in themselves but in the universal divine Idea. This view of things, it is true, is as idealist as Kant; but in contradistinction to the subjective idealism of the Critical Philosophy, should be termed absolute idealism. 38

And interestingly enough, he immediately adds that this is not a peculiar point of view. "It lies at the root of all religion; for religion too believes the actual world we see, the sum total of existence, to be created and governed by God."39

Man shares the divine reason, the divine *nous*, and thus the truth of the world as it presents itself under the necessity of his own reason, is the same truth of the world beyond its appearances of finitude. For Hegel, "Human reason . . . is the divine in man."⁴⁰ To assume that man could not know the truth of things-in-themselves and the truth of God in himself was to assume, Hegel felt, that God is "jealous,"⁴¹ and he was convinced such a position was not only intellectually arbitrary, but also untrue to the practical confidence by which man lives into his world under all the forms of cultural creativity, e.g., art, science, religion and government. Thus, in his inaugural lecture at Heidelberg in 1816 he said to his students,

I can ask nothing of you but to bring with you, above all, a trust in [philosophical] science and a trust in yourselves. The love of truth, faith in the power of mind, is the first condition in philosophy. Man, because he is mind, should and must deem himself worthy of the

highest; he cannot think too highly of the greatness and power of his mind. . . . The Being of the universe, at first hidden and concealed, has no power which can offer resistance to the search for knowledge; it has to lay itself open before the seekerto set before his eyes and give for his enjoyment, its riches and its depths.⁴²

So much, then, for Hegel's idealist confidence in the speculative power of reflective reason over against Kant. We must now note the dialectical character of this reason as it rises from the finite to the infinite and see more precisely how this connects with his general theory of religion.

For Hegel, man's reflective self-consciousness has a "doubled" character, or, it is a unity of two moments between which it constantly oscillates. "I" am that *unity* of consciousness which is aware of itself as *both*

finite *and* finite-as-related-to-the-infinite. In one *unified* consciousness both moments of awareness, awareness of myself as finite and as infinite, exist simultaneously as reconciled in the one life which "I" am. I am the thinking Universal of thought which can abstract from everything. *I* recognize the particularity of myself as a *thinking being* capable of transcending the immediate "thisness" of my own particularity and of rising to the plane of judgment. *I* "judge" concerning the universal truth about what *is* in the very process of abstraction from my "thisness."⁴³ I rise from the consciousness of myself as finite to the infinite ground in terms of which, as grounding my own thinking universality, I recognize what is finite in myself and in the world for what it *is as* finite. To be man thus conscious is to be fully *self*-conscious and it is the very nature and power of man's thinking to make this double consciousness explicit. This is man's glory and it is his burden. It is also what makes him "religious." In a classic passage Hegel writes:

In religion, I am myself the *relation* of the two sides as thus determined. I who think, who am that which lifts myself up, the active Universal, and "I," the immediate subject, are one and the same "I" . . . I elevate myself thinkingly to the Absolute above everything finite, and am infinite consciousnessindeed I am such in accordance with my entire empirical character. Both sides, as well as their relation exist for me. Both sides seek each other and flee each other. At one time, for example, I lay accent on my empirical, finite consciousness and position myself over against the infinite; at another time I exclude myself from myself, condemn myself and give the infinite consciousness the preponderance. . . . The middle of the resolution contains nothing other than the characteristics of both extremes themselves . . . I am the feeling, the intuition, the representation of this unity and this conflict, and what holds together

the conflicting elements; I am the effort which characterizes this holding-together and the work of that disposition which becomes master of this opposition . . . I am the fire and the water which touch each other, and the contact and union of that which plainly flies apart; and this very contact is itself this double, conflicting relation of what is now separated, severed, and now reconciled and in unity with itself.⁴⁴

The point which Hegel seeks to make is that man by virtue of his thinking universality occupies the existential boundaryline between finite and infinite. He is, as it were, the creature who straddles two worlds. He "knows" and "lives" in two realms at once. This dialectical self-consciousness discloses both his ethical and reflective task. He may seek to repress the infinite side of his nature, reducing his active life to the satisfaction of his merely immediate sensuous needs and his reflective life to the consideration of the finite world under abstract categories of *Verstand*, as does, e.g., physical science; or he may positively re-

spond to the infinite side of his nature and rise through *Vernunft* to the infinite ground of all being and truth, ordering his sentient life in keeping with the truth there revealed, and perfecting his thinking life by pursuing reflectively the truth of the infinite as it lays itself open to an "adoring" contemplation not as something which is "beyond" the world of finite nature and spirit, but as eternally and immanently "present" in it.⁴⁵ If he chooses the latter course, man lives a "reconciled," authentic life. The error of the former route is to remain steadfastly in the love and lure of finitude, resisting the claims of infinitude made upon man in his thinking and acting.

But we might legitimately ask Hegel at this point, if one is correct in arguing that religion at this level is the inevitable dialectical phenomenon of human reflective consciousness "rising" to the infinite, how is it that some human beings *in fact* either can or do deny the possibility of knowing the infinite or can and do refuse to celebrate it in explicit or traditional religious terms?

I think Hegel would reply that the choice is open on the *conscious* level of arbitrary [willkürlich] freedom but not the *pre-reflective* level that is, the level of pre-reflective rational instincts or cognitively implicit intentionality. We have seen him admit above that because of "self-will, perversity, or indolence" certain individuals "may interfere with the [religious] necessity of their universal spiritual nature."⁴⁶ Some human beings may indeed explicitly deny that man can or should seek knowledge of the transcendently infinite, traditionally understood as God or the Divine, but implicitly every human being seeks to discover and thematize the meaning of his or her own private, particular being in terms of concepts which root in a universal understanding of

"reality" discovered by reflective thought. Hence, even if some deny that infinite characterized as "God," we find such terms as "Nature" or "Matter" or "Universe" arising which function in a precisely religious manner. That is, thinking *necessarily* rises to some concept of a Universal which defines the limits and possibilities of *all* individual finite being and meaning. The "religious" character of this dialectical process by which thought seeks to understand the meaning of finite human existence in terms of an originating dependence on what is the "ultimately real" is the same for all who *think*, call that ultimate ground or reality what you will and define the precise nature of that dependence however you choose.⁴⁷ Hegel is quite clear that human beings *in fact* order all their practical and culturally creative life in terms of their own understanding of what is universally "Absolute" or infinite.

What is at stake in this form of argument is not simply that the mind or reason of man cannot be *subjectively* satisfied until it is explicitly re-

ligious; it is that the subjective character of thinking as such *requires* an *objective* understanding of what is considered ultimately real and true before it can understand what particularity and finitude mean the particularity and finitude of man or anything else located in the world. As Hegel would put it (and did in his form of the ontological argument), the infinite is not known in terms of the finite; rather, the finite is known only *as such* in terms of the infinite. Or to put it in more traditional philosophical terms, particulars are known *as* particulars only in terms of universals, and universals are supplied by thought alone.

Thinking is not something immediate: it begins indeed from data [Gegebenen], but raises itself [erhebt sich] above the sensible manifoldness of what is given, negates the form of individuality [Einzelheit], forgets the sensuous occurrence and produces the universal, the true. This is not an immediate action, but the work of mediation, the going forth out of finitude. 48

This necessity characteristic of thinking, which he calls "the going forth out of finitude," is an "elevating," an *Erhebung*, intrinsic to the whole question of what it means to "know" and Hegel's chosen term for the highest form of knowing, philosophical knowing, is *Erkennen*. It is a *re*-cognizing in terms of universals, the highest of these being God himself as the Divine Idea.⁴⁹ This dependence on universals, which points to a manifestation of the ultimate Universal Divine Idea intrinsic to human reason as such, is what lures thinking beyond the finite, and this is why it is "religious" in character.

Thought alone has eyes for the essence, substance, universal power, and ultimate design of the world. And what men call the proofs of God's existence are, rightly understood, ways of describing and

analyzing the native course of the mind, the course of *thought* thinking the *data* of the senses. The rise [Erheben] of thought beyond the world of sense, its passage [Hinausgehen] from the finite to the infinite, the leap [Sprung] into the supersensible which it takes when it snaps asunder the chain of sense, all this transition [Übergehen] is thought and nothing but thought. Say there must be no such passage, and you say there is to be no thinking. And in sooth, animals make no such transition. They never get further than sensation and the perception of the senses, and in consequence they have no religion.⁵⁰

Hegel's description of religion at this level as a dialectical movement of reflective consciousness stresses that "religion . . . contains essentially the relation [Verhältnis] of man to God,"⁵¹ but to complete Hegel's viewpoint one must also stress that religion is just as "essentially" the re-

lation of God to man. That is to say, God takes up an *active* role in the production of the religious self-consciousness in man. Thus Hegel says,

Religion is . . . a relation [Beziehung] of the spirit to absolute Spirit . . . this is not merely an attitude [Verhalten] of the spirit toward absolute Spirit, but the absolute Spirit is itself the self-relating [das Sichbeziehende] element, that which brings us into relation with what we have posited as different or the other side [i.e., God as an "Other" in consciousness]. Thus . . . religion is the Idea of the Spirit which relates itself to its own selfthe self-conscious belonging to absolute Spirit, . . . [it] is the Divine Spirit's knowledge of itself through the mediation of finite spirit. Accordingly, in the highest Idea religion is not a transaction [Angelegenheit] of a man, but it is essentially the highest determination belonging to the absolute Idea itself. 52

Hegel further argues as follows:

There cannot be a divine reason and a human reason, a divine Spirit and a human spirit which are *absolutely* [schlechthin] *different*. Human reason [Vernunft]the consciousness of one's essence [Wesen]is indeed reason. It is the divine in man, and Spirit, insofar as it is the Spirit of God, is not a Spirit beyond the stars, beyond the world, but God is present [gegenwärtig], omnipresent, and exists as Spirit in all spirits. God is a living God, who is acting and working. Religion is a product [Erzeugnis] of the divine Spirit; it is not a discovery of man, but a work of divine operation and generation in him.53

Hegel is arguing for a conception of religion which is not simply reduced to the idea that religion is a phenomenon restricted to the subjective productive activity of the finite human consciousness. Religion is not *simply* a human attitude [Verhalten] *vis-à-vis* God as a transcendent "other," though, of course, that is included as one

"moment" of this consciousness. It is an interpenetrating "essential" *relation* or *connection* [Beziehung] which is ontologically, here also epistemologically, dependent on God as the active Spirit who "produces" the religious *Erhebung* characteristic of the reflective activity of human reason. "God is the movement toward the finite and thereby is, as it were, the elevation [Aufhebung] of the finite to himself."⁵⁴ The religious attitude [Verhalten] is explained in terms of an immanent ontological "relation" [Verhältnis] or "connection" [Beziehung] with God who engenders and sustains it. This ontological immanence of God as the creative, rational Spirit at work in the spirit of man and in all of reality is what rescues God from a relation of deistic "Otherness" and makes him always and everywhere "present."⁵⁵ It also guarantees man the possibility of knowing not only *that* God is, but *what* he is. "We must," says Hegel, "get

rid of this bugbear [Schreckbild] of the opposition of the finite and infinite." 56

In his fifth lecture on the "Proofs of the Existence of God," where he deals with those who argue that we have only a negative knowledge of an external relation to God (and in the following quotation Hegel concedes this use of *Verhältnis* for the sake of the argument), he makes the same case:

As thus understood, religion means at least that our spirit comes into contact with this [infinite] content, and our consciousness with this object, and is not merely, so to speak, a drawing out of the lines of longing into empty space, an act of perception which perceives nothing and finds nothing actually confronting it. Such a relation [Verhältnis] implies at all events, this much, that we not only stand in connection [Beziehung] with God, but God also stands in connection [Beziehung] with us. . . . A one-sided relation [Verhältnis], however, is not a relation at all. If, in fact, we are to understand by religion nothing more than a relation [Verhältnis] between ourselves and God, then God is left without any independent existence [Sein]. God would, on this theory, exist in [subjective] religion only; He would be something posited, something produced by us. 57

This we may recognize in passing as Hegel's proleptic criticism of the precise interpretation of religion later to be espoused by Feuerbach.

Let us now draw the net on our discussion at this juncture and summarize what we have discovered about Hegel's concept of religion as a dialectical movement of reflective consciousness. We have learned that there is an *Erhebung* of reflective consciousness whereby man's ability to recognize the finite as finite necessarily leads to the predication of an infinite Ground of all that is finite.

The one concept presupposes the other and the dialectical meaning of both emerges in the unified, but doubled consciousness of man *qua* rational. This *Erhebung* is a universal and necessary phenomenon of reflective consciousness and, as such, constitutes a "general" and "abstract" definition of religion. All human beings are thus "essentially" religious because "essentially" rational. The full speculative explanation of this essentially religious and rational characteristic of man lies in the dialectical ontology of absolute idealism. Reason is what is actual [wirklich] and God is reason in its primordial character as creatively "present" within the *nous* of man and the world. Just as reason is active in constituting objects in the human reflective consciousness, so divine reason is active in constituting objects in the finite world including man as a finite being produced by Nature. Since both the *nous* of man and the *nous* of the world have their common ground in the divine reason, man *can* know the truth of the world in it-

self, the truth of his own being in itself, and the truth of God in himself. Man *does* know this rational truth of things because God is himself the active principle which produces the *Erhebung* of reflective consciousness.⁵⁸ Thus, religion at this level is not something produced by man; it is produced by God as a necessary characteristic of reflective consciousness. Fundamentally, this "religious" consciousness is the conviction that the finite and immediately apparent is not metaphysically ultimate. It is that reflective quest for the truth beyond the finite *and* the conviction that such truth may be achieved.

Now there are many items which cry out for further analysis in this presentation especially the ontological implications of Hegel's doctrine of God. We shall have occasion to discuss this further in Chapter IV. What we simply want to note here, however, is that this is a position on the religious nature of human reflection which is peculiarly Augustinian, hence also Platonic or Neo-Platonic in character. That is to say, Hegel seeks to define religion in terms which require an immediate and necessary relation to and dependence on God for arriving at insightful reflective judgments about being, truth and value.⁵⁹ That is what gives his general theory of religion the necessity and universality it requires in his system. We now turn to a second theoretical characteristic of religion.

Religion as a Form of Thinking Representation

The key Hegelian term here is *Vorstellung*.⁶⁰ Religion in this form is the reflective activity of human reason by which the Infinite is inwardly apprehended under the lingering influence of *contents* derived from finite sensuous perceptions [Wahrnehmungen] and

under the categorical *forms* of the understanding [Verstand]. This apprehension of the Infinite is thus a mode of knowing combining or "mixing" both *a posteriori* and *a priori* elements. It issues in discourse, language, which utilizes the "abstractive" categories and reflective processes of *Verstand* appropriate to the perceptual understanding of the finite, coupled with recollected images drawn from sensuously dependent experience, to express man's knowledge of the nature of the Infinite and its relation to himself and the world.

In the prior section we have shown that religion for Hegel at one level is characterized by a *logical* and *dialectical* necessity intrinsic to all reflective self-consciousness by which it rises from a consideration of the true nature of the finite to the true nature of the infinite. If that is so, then it is proper to say that religion at *this* level is characterized by a *psychological* and *existential* necessity intrinsic to that reflective self-consciousness by which it first symbolizes or conceptualizes the Infinite

encountered in that "rise."⁶¹ In the earlier section we were more concerned to show the ultimate *goal* of reflective consciousness to be the recognition and explication of God as the infinite ground of all being, truth and value. Here we will be concerned to explicate the *process* of reflective self-consciousness by which man discursively *expresses* his awareness of that Infinite in the mode of *Vorstellung*.

In other words, we here touch on Hegel's conception of the meaning and validity of explicitly *religious* language, language about "God." We move from the issue of the implicit *religious* nature of reflective consciousness to the issue of the *reflective* nature of explicitly religious consciousness its nature and limits as discursively expressed. We want to understand how the Infinite, understood as God, takes shape as an "object" of conscious reflection by means of *Vorstellung*. For Hegel *Vorstellung* is the fundamentally determinative and universally identifiable form of the religious consciousness as reflective. "Only the form of the method of representation [Vorstellungsweise] and of reflecting finite consciousness," he says, "is that which is understandable for the religious consciousness."⁶² Again, he observes,

Religion is the form of truth as it is for all men, for every mode of consciousness. This universal formulating of truth by men is firstly [i.e., in point of originating reference] the sensuous [sinnliche] consciousness, and then secondly the inter-mixing of the form of the universal with sensuous appearance [sinnliche Erscheinung], in reflection. The representing [vorstellende] consciousness the mythical, positive, historical is the form which belongs to understandability [Verständlichkeit].⁶³

Preliminary Considerations of Term "Vorstellung" in Hegel's

Thought

In order to advance our understanding of religious *Vorstellung* in Hegel's thinking, several preliminary things need to be said about *Vorstellung* as a central concept in Hegel's general theory of reflective awareness. My observations are intended to be heuristic devices to set the context for a discussion of religious *Vorstellung*, and so there is no attempt to be exhaustive in my analysis.

First of all, it will be clear to everyone who begins to study this term in Hegel's writings that it has nuances of meaning which spread out in several directions at once and it is therefore difficult to define simply. Malcolm Clark offers a salutary warning here.

The question of what Hegel meant by a term is seldom to be answered in the form of a definition. . . . The difficulty is multiplied in regard to the

term "Vorstellung" by the fact that it is a medium between sense and thought, and correspondingly between a mere subjectivity and a true objectivity. Added to that is the circumstance that it is a much handled word which Hegel uses loosely as well as technically. Hence the need for caution with quotations and for a derivation of its exact sense from its place in the dialectic of Subjective Spirit.⁶⁴

The special difficulty here for us is that the more technical care with which Hegel discusses *Vorstellung* in the *Encyclopaedia*, Paragraphs 451464, is not duplicated in most of the contexts where he discusses specifically *religious Vorstellung*, especially in the LPR.⁶⁵ We shall assume, however, that in *whatever* context Hegel uses the term, its fundamental signification given in the *Encyclopaedia* remains operative, i.e., as Clark puts it, *Vorstellung* is a form of reflection which mediates "between sense and thought" and "between a mere subjectivity and true objectivity."

A second observation, following as a direct consequence of the first, is that Hegel's more technical and looser uses of the term *Vorstellung* make it difficult to translate into English from one context to another and keep faith with the *special* nuance Hegel is intending in each context. Thus as both Clark⁶⁶ and Johnston and Struthers⁶⁷ point out, Hegel uses the term variously to designate a *faculty* of cognition, an *activity* of cognition, and the *products* of such cognitive activity (i.e., *Vorstellungen*). The range of proffered translations suggested by Johnston and Struthers reflects this variety of significations and includes the following: "sensuous representation, image, imagination, presentation, idea, general idea, ideation."⁶⁸

Now the German term has the root meaning of "setting before" and

this root sense is linguistically indispensable for understanding Hegel's intention behind the use of the term as it functions in various contexts, i.e., in connection with a faculty for, and the activity or the products of, a certain kind of reflective cognition. I suggest that if one seeks for a reasonably adequate English term which will convey both the literal root meaning of the German term, as well as Hegel's own intentional appropriation of it in his system of important concepts, then the word "representation" is probably the best choice. It does most justice to the root meaning as it is employed in the form of a verb or noun in most contexts.

"Representation" is peculiarly suitable, I think, because *Vorstellung* as a cognitive activity of "reason certain of itself" may be described as the intentionally conscious *re*-presentation within the mind of a subject of an object initially *presented* or experienced as external to the subject's

self-consciousness. Thus *Vortstellung* understood as a *re*-presentation points to the fact that the mind *produces* a *Vorstellung* which "stands for" or "represents," in the normal use of the term an object which was initially experienced perceptually as "other" than the subject, which *remains* "other" as intentionally recollected from the perceptual "past," and is yet recollected from the past for some "present" intended purpose. *Vorstellung*, therefore, points *backward* to sensuous experience and *re-presents* objects initially given in it. To this extent it remains sensuously dependent in the *process* and *products* of reflective intelligence.

At the same time, this *re*-presentation is also a *re-presentation*. That is to say, the reflecting subject *summons up* perceptual images, *re*-collects them inwardly under the analytic thinking power of the understanding (Verstand) and the creative drive of productive imagination (Einbildungskraft and Phantasie). Hence, thought is "mixed" with sensuous recollection in the production of a *Vorstellung*. The thinking subject is *self-active* in the presentation of a *Vorstellung* and *puts its mind*, as well as *its will*, into the product presented or "set before" consciousness. To this extent *Vorstellung* is independent of the sensuous recollection of images drawn from the perceptual past. And, too, this process points to the movement of thinking *forward* to the *rational truth* of an object recollected/recollected, I would stress again, for some specific purpose on the part of the thinking subject. In the context of Hegel's discussion of *der theoretische Geist* the specific cognitive purpose is to overcome the subject's lingering sense that the object remains "other" than the subject's thinking cognition of it. *Vorstellung* as a *re-presentation* points to the self-productive and imaginative power of human thinking to move toward

demonstrating *to itself* that its already won "certainty" that the rational is the real is, in fact, true, that the truth of the knowing subject and object known are not *ultimately* "other." In *Vorstellung* it is not yet fully there, but it is "on the way." It is a middle between sense and thought, between mere subjectivity and pure, or rational objectivity.

Since *Vorstellung* thus has to do with the inwardly recollected cognition *of* an object *by* a mind and *for* a mind, the English term "representation" nicely lends itself to Hegel's use of the term as both a cognitive *activity* of mind and the *products* of mind rendered present to thinking consciousness as a result of that activity products which are syntheses of elements having entered the mind from without and elements contributed by the mind from within.⁶⁹ I therefore shall frequently refer to *Vorstellung* as "representation" in this discussion, but in our translations from the German I generally will follow Clark's procedure and

leave it untranslated. In choosing the term "representation," however, I freely acknowledge that no *one* English term can possibly gather up *all* the nuances of meaning intended by Hegel as he literally "plays" with these nuances of *Vorstellung* from context to context.

The third preliminary consideration of *Vorstellung* as a fundamentally important term in Hegel's system of concepts has to do with the fact, already hinted at above, that his discussions of the term oscillate between positive and negative assessments of its cognitive significance. As a psychological "middle" stage of reflective consciousness where mind as subjective intelligence begins to become aware of its own rational power, and thus exercises a measure of freedom over its own contents of consciousness in the rise to "pure thought," the emphasis is more on the positive side. As an existential "mixture" form of thinking where both sensuous and rational elements are present in synthesized representations which, owing to their partially sensuous dependence, are philosophically inadequate for representing a content which is a product or object of "pure thought," the emphasis is more on the negative side.

This oscillation in Hegel's assessment of *Vorstellung* is in some respects *the* problematic issue in the interpretation of Hegel's entire speculative system, and especially of his philosophy of religion as related to historic Christianity. Simply put, it is the issue of the relationship between thought and experience. It is the issue of the relationship between philosophic thinking and "ordinary" thinking, between reason and history, between pure logic and the developed system, and between philosophy and religion.⁷⁰ The issue is the

strange dialectic of the *dependent*, yet also and at once *independent* relationship of thinking and empirical experience and this two-sided dialectical "truth" is the truth of *Vorstellung*, which, as a psychological "middle" and existential "mixture," "hovers" between the two poles of thought and experience.

"Philosophy," Hegel says, "can be said to do nothing other than to transform *Vorstellungen* into thoughts (Gedanken) though indeed it further transforms the bare thoughts into the concept (Begriff)."71 Cognitive reflection moves inwardly through *Vorstellungen* toward pure thought in cognizing the truth of things. On the other hand, Hegel says that "philosophical mediation" of truth is characterized by a search for rational meaning which moves *back and forth* from *Vorstellung* to the pure concept and from the pure concept to *Vorstellung*: "ein Herüberund Hinübergehen . . . von der *Vorstellung zum Begriffe und von dem Begriffe zum Vorstellung*. . ."72 In contemporary terms we might say the issue posed here is the relation of *symbol* and *thought*, i.e., how it is that the symbol, in Paul Ricoeur's terms, gives rise to critical thought.

In the context of Hegel's general theory of religion, the oscillation be-

tween the positive and negative assessment of *Vorstellung* as the characteristic mode of ordinary religious understanding thus owes itself to his conception of the cognitive oscillation between *Anschauung* and *Denken* "on the way" to pure thought in this case to the *Begriff* of God. It therefore sets the context for his discussion of the way in which, on the one hand, philosophy in its speculative "rise" is said by Hegel to be *dependent* on the religious consciousness of the Infinite as historically developed and concretized in traditions of creed and cult, and, on the other hand, the way in which philosophy is said to *surpass* and to be *independent* of the ordinary religious consciousness in the precision and clarity of speculative thought. It likewise sets the context for Hegel's view that the "final" philosophy exemplified in his own system is "due to modern times and its religion,"⁷³ i.e., the Protestant understanding of historic Christianity, which latter is said by him to be the "absolute" and "true" religion. I will discuss this particular issue in more detail in the next chapter.

For now, our concern is simply to try to understand from the standpoint of theoretical consciousness the nature of religious *Vorstellung* as a psychological "middle" and existential "mixture" of thinking about the Infinite. With these preliminary observations about *Vorstellung* in general behind us, we are now ready to do that.

Religious *Vorstellung*

What distinguishes religious *Vorstellung* from the psychological process of *Vorstellung* in general is that the "object" of the reflective consciousness is "God," i.e., the Infinite. Yet,

In the perceiving [wahrnehmenden] and, with reference to perceptions, reflecting consciousness, man possesses for the speculative relations belonging to the Absolute, only finite relations, whether taken in an exact or symbolical sense [eigentlichen oder symbolischen Sinne], to serve him to comprehend and express those qualities and relationships of the Infinite.⁷⁴

Hence, he adds, there arises the "necessity of *Vorstellungen*" as the first cognitive mode for our understanding of God in the thinking rise to the Infinite. Moreover, it is a "natural" necessity, for *Vorstellung* as a psychologically "middle" mode of *every* form of reflective thinking, is the way the ordinary *living* man, as one who is also by nature a *thinking* being, is most "at home" in his self-consciousness.

Religious Vorstellung as natural and necessary. In religious *Vorstellung* thinking has *already* arrived at the knowledge of the Infinite. Man

already *believes* in God, has *faith* in his existence, implicitly *understands* his nature as the Truth of all being and meaning, and thus seeks to create cognitively discursive representations (*Vorstellungen*) adequate to the truth of God's nature and existence. But if man *has* thus "risen" to the Infinite, *how* does this happen? In the first section we noted that the movement was logically dialectical, but specifically dialectical, with reference to the subject, *in terms of what?* It is dialectical in terms of man's *thinking self-consciousness* as developed in relation to and out of his *empirical experience* as a finite sensuous creature. Religious *Vorstellung*, we might say, is a cognitive activity which preserves in itself the history of this dialectical rise in the cognitive products it sets before itself in order to speak of the Infinite.

"This rise," Hegel says, "has nothing else for its basis but the *thinking* consideration of the world, not merely one which is sensuous, animal-like." He goes on,

The essence, substance, universal power and purposive character of the world is a matter for thinking and *only* for thinking. The so-called proofs of the existence of God are properly understood only as the descriptions and analyses of the self-movement of the mind [Geist], thought thinking the data of the sensuous. The rise of thinking beyond the sensuous, its passing over beyond the finite to the infinite, the leap into the super-sensuous which is made in breaking free from the chain of the sensuous all of this process is thinking and this transition is *only* for thinking. If one says such a passage beyond [the sensuous] cannot be made, then one has said there is no thinking. 75

Animals make no such thinking transition, says Hegel, and that is why "they consequently have no religion."⁷⁶ The human mind (Geist), "as *religious* consciousness," says Hegel,

pierces through the seemingly absolute independence of [individual finite] things to the one, infinite power of God operative in them and holding them all together; and as *philosophical* thinking it consummates this idealization of things by discerning the specific mode in which the eternal Idea forming their common principle is represented [vorgestellt] in them.⁷⁷

The thinking of religious representation in its rise to the Infinite, then, begins with man the finite creature's sensuous experience of the world, but as inwardized and re-collected from the side of reflective thought *about* it. As a psychologically reflective process *Vorstellung* in general seeks the truth of things from the side of thought beyond their mere appearances, and religious *Vorstellung* is that special form of

thought which seeks to represent conceptually for discursive purposes, in the *form* of those appearances, that *ultimate* unifying principle and infinite ground which lies *beyond* those appearances. In this process thinking is variously said to "break free from," "pierce through" or "transform" these appearances, though *temporally* speaking, it remains *dependent* on sensuous experience as the originating occasion and preliminary content of its own activity in its thinking rise to the Infinite.⁷⁸

Given the fact man is essentially a religious being because a thinking being, he is already *implicitly* aware of the Infinite as the ultimate horizon of all being and meaning when he becomes reflectively *self-conscious*. Yet this awareness has the form of feeling or belief and is not yet *explicitly* in the form of thought. This existential immediacy of our awareness of God in the form of feeling or belief is natural and necessary, but "this immediacy . . . by its own onward impulse moves toward mediation, because it is potentially thought."⁷⁹

Religious *Vorstellung* is the natural and necessary process by which this thinking mediation is developed beyond mere feeling or belief, and though self-originating in its religious impulse toward thinking mediation, it remains a still sensuously dependent "middle" mode of cognizing the Infinite. In Hegel's sense of the term, the thinking remains *merely* "symbolic." That is to say, in its symbol-creating capacity (as *Phantasie*) "intelligence . . . still has regard to the content of the [sensuously originated] images [Bilden]" and is thus "only relatively free" in its thinking.⁸⁰ To be *fully free* thought must be a thinking *on thinking itself* and not dependent on external reference for *ultimate* validation.

Here again, of course, we face the key issue on the relationship between thought and experience. By saying thinking is not *ultimately* dependent on sensuous experience, we imply Hegel would not want to deny it is *temporally* so. Nor would he claim that "pure thought" or the language of pure thought is developed without the need to pass "backwards" to experience for imaginative specification and existential certification. His basic point is that it is only *thinking* which first discovers the *difference* between appearance and reality, and if there is to be an epistemological reconciliation between what initially *appears* to be truth of the world and what *is* the case in *truth*, then thought and thought alone must be the means for doing so. And in this sense thought must necessarily possess its own criteria for the validation of claims about what is *ultimately* the case and of claims about its own powers. For Hegel, the rational is the real, the actual (das *Wirkliche*), and he assumes *ordinary* men always *live* as though this were understood to be the case.

This is the assumption behind religious *Vorstellung* in general and that is its positive aspect. The problem with religious consciousness in

this mode of thinking reflection, however, is that it "is merely dipped superficially in the element of thought, is kept there in the sensuous mode of immediacy, and not made one with the nature of thought itself." 81 Linguistically it is the "language . . . of the limited intellect (Verstand) that makes its home in finite categories and inadequate abstractions." It is not the "language of the concrete notion [Begriffe]."82 Hence, ordinary men *live* reflectively "at home" in *Vorstellung*. The language of *Vorstellung*, in the mode of *religious* consciousness, thus hovers between sense and thought, mere subjectivity and pure objectivity in its *thinking* rise to the Infinite. Cognitively speaking it is *implicitly* there already, but not yet *explicitly* so.

So much then, for now, about the natural and necessary nature of man's *dependence* on sensuously empirical experience in his cognitive rise to the infinite. What about the natural and necessary nature of his *independence* as a thinking, *self*-conscious being in the rise?

Man, for Hegel, is the creature who, unlike animals, can abstract from everything given in the sensuous immediacy of mere consciousness and think about his thinking. He is the "I" who is aware he is both sensuously conditioned in thinking and also free in his thinking. He *knows* this to be the case, to be the truth about himself. As such he is spirit (Geist) and he is *self*-conscious.

Because, as we have seen, man remains indeed also a physically finite being, the *initial occasions* of his developing self-consciousness are the sensuous objects with which he is confronted in the physical world. In fact, at the most primordial level of consciousness man is not explicitly aware of any reflective

distinctions between himself and the "world" of physical objects he encounters. The "contents" of the world of physical objects are identical with the "contents" of his own immediate consciousness. He is not aware that his thinking of these objects contributes *anything* to his intuitions of the world as immediately present to consciousness. There is no consciousness of an "inner" or "outer" world; there is only the world-as-present-in-immediacy. Objects at this level are the complete content of consciousness. The object simply *is* the subject, and the subject *is* the object. At the most primordial level of consciousness the "gap" or distinction between subject and object has not yet arisen and *reflection* has not begun.

But it is the whole purpose of Hegel's great *Phänomenologie des Geistes* to show how this consciousness *necessarily* develops reflective distinctions within itself and "rises" to an explicit awareness of the creative role and power of man's thinking reason in the reflection. Man becomes *self-conscious*. He discovers that physical "objects" present to consciousness in their finite immediacy are not adequately compre-

hended in their whole or ultimate truth. He discovers that his own thinking about such objects mediates their immediacy, transforms them in conformity with the organizing function of his own thinking process as that is distinct from the intuition of physical objects themselves given immediately in sensation. The world takes on the role of an "other" to thinking, but an "other" mediated by thinking. This, then, at length gives rise to reflection about reflection, about the nature of the mediating process itself and the specific *form* and *content* of thought as thought. Finally, such reflection issues in a consideration of the ontological status and significance of our thinking reason itself in relation to the ontological status and reality of the finite natural world and of God. The conclusion is reached that the inward activity of rational mediation which transforms the object *into* thought *by* thought, is, in fact, identical in form and content with that self-mediating dialectical activity and reality of the object itself. The truth is that the object is itself rational in form and content; that the unity between subject and object immediately "felt" in the primordial consciousness was not wholly deceptive or erroneous; that the rational *is* the real; and that object and subject are *both* finite modes or moments grounded in the infinite thinking of God, and as such are already and always reconciled in Him because his own reality as Absolute Spirit "overreaches" both. This is the ultimate truth about all that *finitely "is."* It is the absolute knowledge which is at once *our* knowledge of the Absolute and the Absolute's knowledge of itself. 83

In short, human consciousness which begins with a *dependent* preoccupation with thinking as immediately absorbed in the intuitions of only physical objects, *ends* with an *independent*

thinking about thinking *as such* and with an intuition of God as that purely rational reality who overreaches both the subject thinking and the object thought in *His* thinking. He is the truth of their ultimate unity. Their mutual "otherness" is transcended or sublated (*aufgehoben*) in Himat once preserved and yet cancelled.

Such a transcendental or speculative exposition of fully developed human reflective self-consciousness is not actually carried out to the end by the vast majority of human beings. Those who do so are philosophers and obviously all human beings are not philosophers. Philosophers are those persons who pursue the epistemological and ontological implications of ordinary thinking consciousness into what Hegel calls "the pure ether of the Absolute." Most human beings do not do so, even though the necessity of all human thinking ever points in that direction.

Yet there is no human being who does not *think*, who is not *self-conscious*, and, by virtue of the universal necessity which characterizes such thinking, who is not aware that the world as immediately perceived

in sensuous intuition is not the whole or final truth of the world, that "the things immediately known are mere appearances." 84 In short, there is a "middle" stage of thinking reflection characteristic of "most" human beings which Hegel calls "ordinary consciousness" (*gemeines Bewusstsein*), a consciousness which he characterizes parenthetically by the hyphenated adjective "*sinnlich-verständige*." It is, in the *best* sense of the word, common sense thinking. I suggest it is appropriate to understand *Vorstellung* as representative of that universal "middle" mode of reflection at which "most" men remain as thinking beings. They are neither animals who lack self-conscious awareness of the truths of reflective understanding, nor are they professional philosophers who pursue the speculative significance of these truths into the "pure ether" of Absolute thought. The rational truth about themselves, the world and God is reflectively present to consciousness in the mode of *Vorstellung*, which as *gemeines Bewusstsein* is a "mixture of sense and understanding." Hence, whatever be the primary origin of the "objects" inwardly present to this "ordinary" mode of reflective consciousness whether they be intuitions of sensuous objects derived from without which are always mixed with "thought," or intuitions of spiritual, *geistigen* objects derived from within, which are always mixed with "sense" we may understand such a consciousness as thinking in the mode of *Vorstellung*.

In our *Vorstellungen* a two-sided condition obtains so that either the content is provided by thought, but not the form; or, conversely, the form belongs to thought but not the content. If I say, for example, anger, rose, hope, I acknowledge all such things as coming to me by way of sensation, but I speak of this content in a universal manner, in

the form of thought. I have left out much that is particular and only given the content as something universal; yet the content remains sensuous. Conversely, if I represent [vorstelle] God to myself, the content is, to be sure, a product of pure thought, but the form is still sensuous in the way that I find it immediately present in myself. In *Vorstellungen*, therefore, the content is not merely sensuous, as it is in direct examinations of things; rather, either the content is sensuous and the form appertains to thought, or *vice-versa*. In the first case the material is given and the form belongs to thinking; in the other case the content which has its source in thinking is by means of the form turned into something given, which accordingly reaches the mind from without.⁸⁵

This quotation is important for our interpretation of Hegel's concept of religious *Vorstellung*, for it stresses its "mixture" character as it pertains to *all* the "objects" which enter into our subjective conscious reflection. It is the way "ordinary" human beings in their quest for truth

think about *everything* including God. The point to be stressed is that religious consciousness is characterized by *Vorstellung* not simply because it is *religious*, but because, psychologically speaking, that is the form of reflective consciousness which universally characterizes the "ordinary" way man in the quest for truth *thinks* about *everything*. And we may say that, existentially speaking, *Vorstellung* is a "mixture" mode of thinking because man is a "mixture" being. Just as man is a "mixture" being with finite and infinite dimensions of consciousness i.e., as a sensuously dependent finite being who at the same time is capable of sharing the standpoint of the infinite in thought, just so *Vorstellung* is a "mixture" consciousness combining finite and infinite elements i.e., as a thinking which is at once always to some extent sensuously dependent and yet always to some extent independently ordered by thought.

In *Vorstellung* man *qua* man, man as a thinking being creatively existing in a finite world, "as a living man," is already *reflectively* a step *above* the deceptive presentational immediacy of sensuous perception, while yet still a step *below* the speculative world of pure thought. The speculative truth known by the philosopher, that "the actual is the rational, and the rational the actual" is *already implicitly* present in *Vorstellung*. Philosophy *begins* with the representational consciousness of *Vorstellung*, and thus "it can be said that philosophy does nothing other than to transform *Vorstellungen* into *Gedanken*." 86 Thus, also,

man not only to begin with recognizes truth by the name of *Vorstellung*, but he is also . . . *as a living man* at home with it alone. The task of philosophic science, however, is not to write its configurations into . . . abstract realms only. It is also to specify and point

out their incarnation . . . the existence which they maintain *in actual spirit* and that existence is *Vorstellung*.⁸⁷

By "actual spirit" I take Hegel to mean the cognitively reflective products of the self-conscious activity of the human spirit as concretized in cultural existence. If that be so, then Hegel clearly means to say that *Vorstellung* is that mode of consciousness in which man is universally albeit, from a speculative point of view, only implicitly "at home" with the reflective truth that the "rational is the actual." *Vorstellung* is a *form* of reflection in which this truth is latent, but it is not the highest or purest form of such truth. Philosophy, moreover, *begins* with this conviction about *Vorstellung*. What it does in contrast to it, generally speaking, is to move further inward and upward toward the side of the constitutive power of thought in consciousness in order to discover by a more thorough reflective analysis the epistemological and ontological

implication of that self-constitutive power. In this process it "transforms" *Vorstellungen* into *Gedanken* and the *Begriff*. Specifically *religious Vorstellung*, whose "object" is God himself, is subject to the same philosophically transforming process and shares *both* the dignity *and* the deficiency of all such "middle" representational reflection.

Religious Vorstellung as speculatively deficient. In the foregoing paragraphs we have sought to show that while *Vorstellung* from a purely speculative or transcendentally reflective point of view may be characterized as a "lower" form of self-conscious reflection than the pure thinking about thought as such, it is nonetheless, the more "natural" form of reflective self-consciousness, the form in which human beings universally feel "at home" with themselves in the finite world as thinking beings. Implicit in *Vorstellung* is the conviction of truth that "the rational is the real" but it is only implicit, and as long as it is so, there inevitably emerges a "dialectical" unrest in this form of consciousness when the attempt is made to express this truth in a systematic manner.

This is why, *from the viewpoint of the philosopher*, the language of *Vorstellung* is a manifestation of "the limited thinking which makes its home in finite categories and onesided abstractions." 88 And *vice versa*, that is why, *from the standpoint of "ordinary consciousness,"* speculative thinking and language always present themselves as a peculiarly odd form of consciousness which "walks on its head." There is a natural resistance on the part of ordinary consciousness to the pressure, or perhaps we should say the lure, of speculative thinking. Indeed, Hegel suggests there is a "dread" in the feeling of being compelled to do so even for the philosopher!

The decision to philosophize casts itself purely into thinking . . . as into an ocean without beaches; all bright colors, all mainstays have vanished, all friendly lights otherwise present are extinct. Only one star still shines, the inner star of spirit. . . . It is natural that, thus alone, Spirit is assailed . . . by dread.⁸⁹

Yet if there is a dread, there is also a strange attraction. Man is, as we have noted earlier, "a born metaphysician."

That the natural consciousness [natürliches Bewusstsein] immediately entrusts itself to [philosophical] science is an attempt it makes, attracted by it knows not what, to walk for once on its head. The compulsion to adopt this unaccustomed position and to move in it amounts to the presumption that

the natural consciousness should do itself violence in a manner as unexpected as it must seem unnecessary.

Whatever science may be in itself, in relation to immediate self-consciousness, it presents itself as something topsy-turvy. Or: because immediate self-consciousness has its principle of actuality [Wirklichkeit] in its certainty of itself, science bears the form of unactuality for this immediate self-consciousness which seems to stand outside of science. Science must therefore join this element to herself, or rather she must show that and how it belongs to her. 90

Now *Vorstellung* is the form of this "natural consciousness" and the dual sense of dread and attraction which attaches to it in the face of its philosophic transformation is symptomatic of both the dignity and defect it represents as a middle and mixture mode of human reflection. Its dignity is that it is implicitly *rational* in its confidence that the rational *is* the actual. Its defect is that this confidence remains *only* implicitly such and in exercising this confidence in self-originating representational thinking it remains wedded or "mixed" in form and content with a merely finite mode of reflective consciousness. But precisely *what* is it that makes such a mode of reflective consciousness inadequate as "*merely* finite"? In what does the mode of its cognitive deficiency lie? And how does this defect of *Vorstellung* in general affect *religious Vorstellung* in discursive language about God?

In order to address this question, it is necessary at this point to understand something of the relationship between *Vorstellung* and *Verstand* in Hegel's thinking. *Vorstellung*, as ordinary or natural consciousness, we recall, is characterized by Hegel as "sinnlichverständige," a combination of *a posteriori* elements contributed by the senses and *a priori* elements contributed by the

reflective understanding. Religious *Vorstellung*, then, is a thinking about God for discursive purposes which produces synthesized conceptualities made up of both elements. Thus, when Hegel speaks of the "revelation" or self-manifestation of "infinite thought [or] Absolute Spirit" which occurs in religious awareness, he states that

The vehicle by which it [Absolute Spirit] does so is the heart [Herz], the representing consciousness [das vorstellende Bewusstsein], and the understanding [Verstand] which is appropriate to finite things. . . . In perceiving [wahrnehmenden] consciousness and with reference to the perceptions reflecting consciousness, man has on hand only finite relations for the speculative relations which belong by nature to the Absolute.⁹¹

How so, and why is this a problem?

The basic problem is that thinking in the mode of *Vorstellung* is essentially "abstractive" in relation to the object made reflectively present to consciousness, and this proclivity for "abstract" thinking is the point where *Vorstellung* and *Verstand* "coincide" in the process of finite reflective cognition. The deficiency in this abstractive mode of thinking may be said to be both objective and subjective in character.

The objective deficiency has to do with what Hegel calls the "peculiarity" of *Vorstellung* in cognizing objects by means of "isolated" determinations of thought, i.e., in the form of inwardly punctiliar occasions of conscious reflection. It reconstitutes objects in this context sensuous objects by means of subjectively constructed and universalized "images" which, for example, present the totality of an object under only one of its determinations, i.e., "the rose is red" excluding its determinations of prickliness, odor, size, etc. The "concreteness" of the rose is lost in the thinking particularization of the whole under one of its aspects or determinations given in the recollected perceptual "image."⁹² The particularization of an object in terms of one of its isolated determinations which characterizes sensuous intuition is preserved in *Vorstellung* and the object as an "in-and-for-itself" *concrete* reality remains "broken up" in *Vorstellung* within our consciousness as something of which serial and distinct synthetic predication are made the rose is red *and* prickly *and* odorous. Thus *Vorstellung* as a middle "stage" of reflecting consciousness is predominantly a result of "formalized" or "abstract" thinking.⁹³ Hegel therefore writes,

Here *Vorstellung* coincides with [zusammentrifft] *Verstand*, which is distinguished from the former only by the fact that it posits relations

of universal and particular, or cause and effect, etc., and thereby establishes connections among the isolated determinations of *Vorstellung*, since *Vorstellung* leaves them as they were in its indefinite realm, bound together one-after-another [nebeneinander] by means of the mere "also" [auch].⁹⁴

Thus, the recollected "images" produced by the activity of *Vorstellung* are still "syntheses, which do not grow to the concrete immanence of the [object's] *Begriff* until the stage of *Denken*."⁹⁵ In *Vorstellung* the rose *is* known, but is known primarily in its "abstract" determinations [Bestimmungen] as mediated in sensuous intuition. We must not forget, however, that the *Vorstellung* is not merely "objectively" deficient because of the "abstractive" activity of the *subject*. The object itself *is* "many-sided" in character *for itself*, and thus, too, *for us*, but its truth or "objectivity" *in-and-for itself*, in its *Begriff* as known by *Vernunft*, is a *unity in difference*. Formal thinking and *Vorstellung* do accurately re-

present the "truth" of the difference, but in abstraction from the "essential" truth of the unity. This is the positive side of *Vorstellung* and "formal thinking," and it is a necessary *first* step in the movement toward *pure* thinking. Formal thinking and *Vorstellung* as an expression of it are inadequate when they *stop* here, when such are considered the final truth and only power of thought in relation to the object.⁹⁶

It is this tendency to "stop," however, which moves Hegel constantly to refer to such formal thinking as inadequate, and it is the "abstractive" tendency of *Verstand* which is the *bête noire*. As with *Vorstellung*, for which *verständiges* thinking is sometimes a synonym in Hegel's discussions of *all* forms of deficient cognition, including the religious form, the objective deficiency has to do both with the *form* of *Verstand* as a mental activity and with the *content* or products of such activity.⁹⁷

As to the *form* of such activity, the function of *Verstand* "consists, in general, in making abstractions,"⁹⁸ i.e., abstractive or reflective distinctions in our comprehension of objects present to consciousness. The formal deficiency of such *verständiger* abstraction is that it organizes our perceptions of objects in the mode of *differentiation*. Thus, as we have seen, it has to do with the universalizing activity of thinking whereby we refer to objects as a *whole* under *one* of the intrinsic perceptual qualities which characterizes them. This is an abstractive predication about an object with respect to its own *inherent*, apparently mutually isolated, distinctive qualities. The object in its *begrifflichen unity*, as a dynamic, dialectical unity, is not yet cognitively grasped and such an abstractive cognition remains "merely finite."

Thinking in the mode of *Verstand* is thus, in this respect, the same thing as thinking in the mode of *Vorstellung*; it is a form of thinking which connects isolated determinations of thought by a mere "also," i.e., the rose is red, and *also* odorous, and *also* prickly, etc. The rose *in itself* beyond the "alsos" is not truly known in this form of cognition, though the "impulse" of such cognition, Hegel is convinced, is to push beyond such an "abstract" limit where the object and its predicates fall apart in unreconciled cognitive differentiation.

The thinking activity of *Vorstellung*, therefore, as directed by the abstractive impulse of the understanding, *either* confuses or arbitrarily "mixes up" the serially isolated predicated qualities of the immediate sensuous "appearance" of the object with predication of the object as it is in its rational truth and being, *or* it postulates an arbitrary and radical difference between the object as it appears and what it is in itself. In *Vorstellung* the object as empirically perceived in its *immediate unity* is reflectively rearranged in its representational recollection in terms of its *differentia*. The externally temporal *nebeneinander* and *nacheinander*

character of the sensuous perceptions of an object is formally retained in *Vorstellung*, but now transferred into an *inward* temporality of thinking where the thinking subject does such rearranging under the lingering awareness that this is *his* activity, and *his* rearrangement may be "other" than the truth of the object *in itself*. He is only *implicitly* reconciled with the object. The unity of thought and being is *assumed*, but not yet made explicit *in thinking*.

This brings us naturally to the second fault of *Vorstellung*, i.e., its subjective deficiency. The subjective deficiency is implicit in and correlative with the objective deficiency. That is to say, the immediate "unity" of the object which thinking representation seeks to express along with the object's pluralized or many-sided determinations is a unity *we* bestow on *it*. As Hegel is wont to put it, *we* are the "universal" (in the sense of uni-versus-alia) in which these determinations find their unity. The object is, as it were, "pieced together" in the ego from the sensuous recollections of the determinations by means of the productive imagination (Einbildungskraft). The imagination freely and spontaneously reproduces and associates the differentia of an object by means of inwardized and recollected sensuous images in order to express the truth of an object. The deficiency is that the mode of cognition remains "abstract" over against the objective dialectical *unity* of the object itself and "abstract" in the formal mode of representing the object inwardly by means of serial, *rationally* unconnected predication about the object. It is in this cognitively abstractive propensity that *Vorstellung* coincides with the formal impulse of *Verstand* for thinking in the mode of *differences*.⁹⁹ So much, then, for the *form* of thinking whereby *Vorstellung* and *Verstand* are linked.

What of the *content* of *Verstand* as it is related to representational thinking? The content of *Verstand* may be said to be that which it adds to or provides *a priori* for our reflective activity in connection with our sensuous intuitions. Thinking in the mode of *Verstand* not only provides for our awareness of *differences* in our knowledge of objects, it also provides *connections* in our reflective consideration of them. That is to say, as noted above, "it posits relations of universal and particular, or cause and effect, etc., and thereby establishes connection among determinations of *Vorstellung*."¹⁰⁰ It provides the categorical schema, in Kant's terms, by which predication of connections or relationships between the *differentia* of the object itself *and* between *separate objects* are made by the "ordinary" thinking consciousness. Thus, to continue our analogy, a rose is intuited to be red, *and* fragrant, *and* soft, but it is also understood to be a *rose*, an object whose recognized contingent particularity shares in the abiding universals of "flower" and "roseness." It

is understood not to be a tree, or a stone, or a dog, and it is understood to be "caused" by a seed, the sun, the soil, the rain, etc. *Verstand* is the mode of thinking reflection whereby these distinctions and their relationships are made possible and necessary. More specifically, its function consists in "working up the inwardized *Vorstellungen* into species, genera, laws, forces, etc., into categories, in the sense that the raw material [of sense] first has the truth of its being in these thoughtforms." 101 Such categories, then, though natural and necessary in all our initial reflective cognition, are also for Hegel "abstract" as a *resting place* for thinking in the dual sense that these connections are *either* objectively deficient in one's arbitrarily postulating that an object only may be known as it *appears* to this forever-fixed finite mode of categorical understanding, but not for what it is *in itself*, or subjectively deficient in that one's serial and arbitrarily "mixed" application of these categories *to* the object misrepresents the immanent truth *of* the object in its *begrifflichen* unity. That "truth" is known only to *Vernunft* and this is why cognitively reflective knowledge of an object in the mode of *Verstand* is speculatively or philosophically deficient. And that is why *Vorstellung*, as operating under the impulse of *Verstand*, is likewise deficient.

How does this analysis of *Vorstellung* and *Verstand* in general relate to the issue of the speculative inadequacy of *religious Vorstellung* in man's thinking rise to the infinite?

The first problem of religious *Vorstellung* arises from the fact that "God" as a *geistige* object has its content *origin* in "pure" thought. The subject is *already* aware *that* God is, and that the *truth about him* is essentially "rational." But thinking activity in the mode of

Vorstellung remains dependent on the sensuous it is a form of *sinnlich-verständiges* consciousness. Hence, in the case of "God" "the content which has its source in thinking is by means of the form turned into something given, which accordingly reaches the mind from without."¹⁰² Man as a *reflectively self-conscious* being universally and hence *necessarily* intuits what we would call the infinite horizon of the divine as the ultimate ground of all being, truth and value. And this necessary intuition is a product of pure thought since all thinking, meaning in Hegel's sense of the term, thinking for *truth*, is *interpretive*. It is inwardly driven on by the implicit awareness of the distinction between fact and value, appearance and reality, universal and particular, finite and infinite, etc. "Man is . . . always thinking [denkend] even when he only [sensuously] intuits [anschaut]."¹⁰³ This interpretive awareness *presupposes* an "actual" or "objective" norm for discursive statements about being, truth and value as manifest or revealed *to* thinking. This norm, to use my own term

again, is the infinite horizon of that implicit human criteriological awareness present in all thinking which, religiously speaking, we call "God." Unpacking that presuppositional awareness *in* thinking is the unique task *of* thinking, and in rendering that implicit, rationally interpretive awareness *explicit*, man begins to speak of "God." "God" is a content-object of "pure" thought in the sense that he is the ontological ground for the *possibility* of all thought, and hence not empirically discoverable as an immediate datum of sensuous experience. Thus Hegel can assert, "God in his essence [Wesen] is thought, thinking itself," 104 and he is therefore available to man's thinking self-consciousness only as an "object" of pure thought. In this sense it is appropriate to say God is the beginning and end, the origin and the *telos*, of the possibility of *all* human thinking in man's quest for truth.

Religious *Vorstellung*, therefore, is a form of reflective thinking in terms of which the implicit awareness of God as an object of pure thought *is becoming* explicit. It is "on the way" in the explicitly *thinking* rise to the infinite, and as such has the same goal or "content" as speculative philosophy. Religion for Hegel is essentially rational in its content and from that conviction he will not budge.¹⁰⁵ However, the *form* of religious consciousness, given the peculiarity of *Vorstellung*, remains linked to sensuous or empirical experience in its discursive predication about God and to this extent remains "merely finite." It "borrows" sensuous or empirically derived finite and contingent *content* to express the truth of God as a *geistige* reality which is infinite and necessary as a content and object of *pure thought*. He is first inwardly represented, and then discursively represented, by means of

recollected sensuous images originally drawn from our experiences in the finite world.

Thus, when "God" is rendered present to thought as a *gestiges* object in the mode of *Vorstellung*, he may be represented by sensuously recollected images which are ultimately referable to physical objects in the natural world (e.g., "God is light" or "He is our rock of strength"), by social images which refer to some events in world history (e.g., "God delivered Israel from all her oppressors" or "He is King of kings"), or by personal images which refer to those human qualities and activities characteristic of free subjects (e.g., "God is love," "God gave his only-begotten Son," or "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him").¹⁰⁶

It is important to keep in mind that, consistent with his oscillation between positive and negative assessments of *Vorstellung* in general, this sensuous dependence is not characterized in a *wholly* negative manner. For example, when Hegel discusses the issue of the signification or

"meaning" [Bedeutung] of the term "God," he suggests that anyone asking such a question may actually be calling for two different sorts of clarification. The first sort of clarification would have to do with the explicitly rational or "thought" content of the term which is given only implicitly in ordinary religious *Vorstellung*. One does not ask a question of meaning about that which is *wholly* unknown and so in this first case

When we thus ask "what is God?" "What does the expression God signify?" it is the thought [Gedanke] in it we desire to know; the *Vorstellung* we possess already. Accordingly, what is significant here is that we have got to specify the notion [Begriff] . . . ; it is the Absolute, the nature of God as grasped by thought, the logical knowledge of this, which we desire to obtain. 107

The second sort of clarification requested would be of an opposite character, i.e.,

When we begin to occupy ourselves with pure thought-determinations [Gedankenbestimmungen], and not with [Vorstellung] it may be the mind does not feel satisfied, is not at home, in these, and asks what this pure thought-determination signifies. . . . What is asked for in such a case is . . . a [Vorstellung] of the thought-determination . . . , an example of the content, which has as yet only been given in thought. If we find a thought-content difficult to understand, the difficulty lies in this, that we possess no [Vorstellung] of it; it is by means of an example that it becomes clear to us, and that the mind first feels at home with itself in this content. 108

Here we come again upon that dialectical emphasis in Hegel that speculative thinking is at once a "herüber- und hinübergehen" process, a *passing back and forth* from *Vorstellung* (as dependent on sensuously mediated experience and images) to *Gedanke* (as

"rising above" such a dependence on external mediation). The positive side of such dependence, then, involves Hegel's recognition of the *external temporal priority* of sensuous experience as the initiating occasion of all thinking reflection and his recognition of the *internal temporal priority* of representational thinking in the psychology of reflection "on the way" to pure thought about God. This recognition of the logical priority of *Vorstellung* in the psychology of reflection (i.e., in terms of the *ordo cognoscendi*) is likewise a recognition of man's enduring existential condition as a *finite* creature bound to time and space and to history. That is why, even though he is "essentially" a thinker, he is first (existentially speaking) "at home" in this *middle* mode of reflection.

Man is not merely pure thinking, but thinking manifests itself as intuition [als Anschauen], as representation [als Vorstellen]. Absolute truth, which is revealed to man, must therefore, exist for him as a being who represents and intuits, for him who as a man is a feeling [ühlenden], sensing [empfindenen] being. 109

The insistence that Absolute Truth "must exist" for man understood as a naturally intuiting and representing creature leads to our final point in noting the positive aspect of man's sensuous dependence in thinking. The assumption behind this "must exist" is explicitly ontological and is an important link in understanding why a return to *Vorstellung* is not only natural, because "comfortable," but also necessary, because cognitively illuminatory. Though Hegel insists that while to "pure" speculative thought, in its quest for an answer to the first issue of meaning, "the logical Idea is God as He is *in Himself*," he *also* insists "it is just the nature of God He should not be implicit or in Himself only." That is, he is also *for* himself, "not only the Being who keeps himself within thought, but who also manifests himself, and gives himself objectivity."¹¹⁰ Or as he puts it in another place, the logical *Begriff* of God "makes itself objective, turns itself into reality."¹¹¹ What does *that* mean?!

"Popularly speaking," he says, "we say God is Lord of the natural world and of the realm of Spirit."¹¹² This self-revealing presence of God in his creation is why religious *Vorstellung* as *dependent* on the "natural world" of sensuous experience is *preserved* as well as, to be sure, cancelled in its speculative transformation. God is "manifest" or "revealed" *in it*. The natural world might even be said to be the *Vorstellung* of God himself, God *revealing* himself in *actual* existence. The world is *not* God in its immediacy, but he is its essential truth as the ground of its rational *being and meaning*.

beyond its sensuous form and finite contingencies. And that is why religious *Vorstellung*, while "mixing" sense and thought, is yet a mode of *thought* where the essential *truth* of the world, as a manifestation of God, is *preserved*. The sensuous images of the natural world as mediated in *Vorstellung* which are used to speak about God, are not, therefore, *ultimately* alien to *pure thought* about God.¹¹³

In our thinking about God, therefore, religious *Vorstellung* is a "moment" of thought by which the truth of the reconciled unity of thought and being is becoming clear to the human subject, and the developing reconciliation is predicated on the ontological assumption that God has revealed himself in the natural world from which *Vorstellung* takes its existential start in man's thinking rise to the infinite.¹¹⁴ If we take the term "natural world" in the extended sense of the world as empirically mediated through our sensuously dependent experience, then to speak

of God in the mode of *Vorstellung* under rationally mediated images drawn from physical objects, historical events and personal relations is not, in traditional language, to speak either equivocally or univocally, but rather analogically, symbolically, or mythically. In religion we deal with implicit speculative truth or universal thought in the form of "myths, imaginative representations [Phantasie-Vorstellungen] and positive and proper histories [positiven eigentlichen Geschichten]," and it is the task of pure thought to render this implicit truth explicit. 115

We should be clear, then, as Hegel sometimes for the sake of brevity is not, that the deficiency in our dependence on the sensuous in religious *Vorstellung* lies not ultimately in the existential and epistemological fact *that* we are so dependent, but in the cognitive *mode* that that dependency is understood. That is to say, pure thought *needs* "examples" in the mode of *Vorstellung* on the way to pure thought about God, but ordinary thought errs when it *rests* there and makes predication about God as a non-contingent infinite reality drawn from the finite understanding's analysis of the merely contingent relations predictable about the relations between finite objects in their empirical immediacy. In pure thought, speculative thought, such a "sinnlich-verständiges Bewusstsein" is sublated (aufgehoben) cancelled and yet also preserved in the rational transformation performed by *Vernunft*.

This transformation, Hegel himself suggests, may be called "mystical" as well as speculative, and it is here we touch again on the *verständigen* deficiency of religious *Vorstellung*. To speak of this transformation as "mystical" suggests there is a "mystery" in it. "There is mystery in the mystical," Hegel admits, but

only however for the understanding [Verstand] which is ruled by the principle of abstract identity; whereas, the mystical as synonymous with the speculative, is the concrete unity of those determinations which the understanding accepts as true only in their separation and opposition. . . . The rational as such consists in the fact that these oppositions are taken up [enthalten] as ideal moments in itself.¹¹⁶

Verstand, we remember, is the mode of thinking which, as abstractive, in the first place concentrates on the apprehension of objects in the form of differences in our predication about them. These predication are serial or "isolated," and *Verstand*, due to its abstractive character, in the second place is forced to supply *connections* between the isolated predication by means of its *a priori* categorical schema. *In* the object the predication are perceived as only *externally* related, and *Verstand* supplies *from itself* these connections in an equally abstract or lifeless

manner in independence from the object. The *vernünftige* truth of the object as the "overreaching" *geistige* unity of the unity and disunity of the object's finite determinations is unrecognized and unrecognizable by *Verstand* and by such *Vorstellungen* dependent on its functions.

When we speak of God at this level of reflective cognition, we are thus wont to speak of him in serial and rationally unconnected predication of his being and nature. He is, we may say, good, *and* loving, *and* wrathful. By means of the categorical schema we may also speak of him as the creator of the world, the "First Cause," etc. In both cases, such predication fail to grasp the *Begriff* of God and the way in which these predication exist immanently *in* him, and so such predication leave unresolved oppositions in our knowledge. How can he be loving *and* wrathful at the same time? How is he as the necessary "First Cause" related to all contingent finite causes? In religious *Vorstellung* man is aware that all such thinking and speaking about God as the Infinite is implicitly "dialectical" and is fraught with a sense of unresolved contradictions characteristic of *Verstand* in general.¹¹⁷ Hence because religious *Vorstellung* remains *Vorstellung*, the way to resolve the inadequacy in such predication is not *known*. There is only the as yet subjective "feeling" and "faith" that such contradictions are not "objectively" final or absolute. Such are the conundrums which thinking in the mode of *Verstand* presents to the religious consciousness in its *Vorstellung* of God. Again we must note, the deficiency in such predication is not *that* they are made, but the *mode* in which they are often understood i.e., as *final* or ultimately unresolvable for thought itself. It remains the speculative task of pure thought to transcend this resting place and

this agnostic assumption in the "mysticism" of reason as *Vernunft*. And this is the task of philosophy.

To sum up this theoretical analysis of religion as a form of reflective understanding, then, we can say we have learned why Hegel wants to insist that religious *Vorstellung* is the most proximate form of making predication about God short of speculative philosophy itself. Because religious *Vorstellung* is *implicitly* rational in its cognitive reflection about the infinite, it is uniquely appropriate as the starting point for speculative thought, and in this sense "religion is the truth as it exists for all men."¹¹⁸ It is naturally so, because all men are not philosophers, but inadequately so, because speculative thought recognizes it, as it itself does not, as only a middle stage in man's thinking rise to the infinite hovering between mere subjectivity and pure objectivity, and as a mixture of sense and thought. It is and remains a "sinnlich-verständige" mode of consciousness which must be speculatively or mystically transformed (*aufgehoben*) in order for man finally and clearly to speak discur-

sively about God in and for himself and as present to us in our personal and cultural history.

In this section we have remained only within the general concept of religion as Hegel discusses it in its theoretical forms a dialectical movement of reflective consciousness overreaching a merely finite consciousness of the world, and as a form of thinking representation about God which is at once natural and necessary to all men as living beings, and yet, from a speculative point of view, which is ultimately deficient in the manner by which discursive predication about God are made.

We now turn to Hegel's general concept of religion in its practical form.

The Practical Characteristics of Religion

When I speak of the practical characteristics of religion in Hegel's general theory of religion I refer to the way in which man's inward and subjective religious consciousness is expressed in his concrete and objective cultural existence. For purposes of analysis *theoria* and *praxis* may be distinguished, but for Hegel they are inextricably linked in the concrete life of man as spirit.

Mind [Geist] is in principle thinking, and man is distinguished from beast in virtue of thinking. But it must not be imagined that man is half thought and half will, and that he keeps thought in one pocket and will in another, for this would be a foolish idea. The distinction between thought and will is only between the theoretical attitude and the practical. These, however, are surely not two faculties; the will is rather a special way of thinking, thinking translating itself into existence, thinking as the urge to give itself existence. 119

If man is essentially, hence necessarily, religious as a thinking being, then this characteristic will necessarily "give itself existence" in the way human beings in history develop their cultural life together.

Given this perspective on the relation of thought and will, and building on our discussion in the just-preceding section, it can be shown, I think, that the term *Vorstellung* has a broader applicability in Hegel's thought than that which is restricted to or reduced to the level of theoretically cognitive questions having to do only with the inward mental life of man, i.e., only with the psychology of reflection and the epistemological-ontological questions related thereto. The language of *Vorstellung*, we recall, represents speculative truth as "incarnated" in

actual spirit, 120 i.e., as represented in man's cultural life.

Vorstellung, then, may be said to have to do not only with the way human beings *think*, but also with how they *live* how thought "gives itself existence." If theoretical *Vorstellung* has to do, therefore, with the way men at the level of ordinary consciousness seek to *think* and *cognize* the truth of "what is" as individual rational beings, then what we may call cultural *Vorstellung* is the way human beings seek creatively to embody and symbolize that truth as collective social and historical beings. *Vorstellung* in this extended sense is a matter of *praxis* as well as *theoria*.

I am suggesting that there is a *formal* parallelism between the *theoretical* activity by which human beings *subjectively* transform sensuous intuitions into "representations" for the purpose of personal reflection and in order more adequately to cognize the rationally universal elements in them (as a means of being more fully "at home" with that sensuous side of their existence), and the *practical* activity by which they *objectively* transform their social and historical existence into cultural representations for the purpose of creative social development and in order more adequately to express the rationally universal elements which lie at the basis of their common life (again, as a means of being more fully "at home" with that social and historical side of their existence).

But there is also a *material* parallelism. Hence, the nature and form of those mental representations by which human beings seek to produce for themselves the truth of things as they really are (meaning for Hegel in this context the truth of the actual ontological relationship which obtains between God and the world, infinite and finite), necessarily determines the nature and form of

the cultural representations of that same truth they develop for themselves in history.

If Hegel insists on the necessary unity of thought and being, then he equally insists on the necessary unity of thought and act and by extension, the necessary unity of mental representations of the truth of what is and the social and historical ways in which that truth is "built into the world" by man through his cultural institutions.¹²¹ That is why it is possible for Hegel to develop a philosophy of cultural history which is at once also a philosophy of *religion*. As we noted before,

The philosophy of religion has to discover . . . how the nature of a nation's moral life, the principle of its law, of its actual liberty, and of its constitution, as well as its art and science, corresponds to the principle which constitutes the substance of a religion. That all these elements of a nation's actuality constitute one systematic unity, that one spirit creates and informs them, is a truth which follows the further truth that the history of religion coincides with world history.¹²²

Now by cultural *Vorstellung* I mean specifically those so-called secular and sacred institutional structures which reciprocally embody and objectively represent a nation's true "Geist." The secular structure of the state and the sacred structures of the religious cult and community *represent* a people's normative understanding of themselves and their relation to the divine or to God to what Hegel in the quotation just mentioned calls "that Being [Wesen] known as the Absolute." These two forms of cultural *Vorstellung* are both "religious" in the sense that they are products of man's attempt to symbolize that rational understanding of his proper relationship to God as both a dependent being and yet a freely responsible being. To use Tillich's phrase, both man's secular and sacred institutions reflect and embody his "ultimate concern" because culture is the form of religion and religion is the substance of culture.¹²³ It is true, as we shall see shortly, that, for example, the institutions of the state and religion are indeed "different" and that the former more explicitly celebrates man's independent freedom while the latter more explicitly celebrates his finite dependence. Yet in terms of their "religious" concern and intentionality they are "one and the same . . . *an und für sich*" identical.¹²⁴ They are "identical" in that they both may be said to exist as "representations" of God, of the truth of the Absolute and man's relation to it.

Now, quite clearly, Hegel uses the conception of *Vorstellung* predominantly in the context of discussion about the dual dignity and deficiency of man's "ordinary" mode of reflective consciousness. But I think it worthwhile to note that the dialectic of alienation and reconciliation explicitly attached to *Vorstellung* in that epistemological context has legitimate implications for

clarifying some aspects of his philosophy of culture and his general theory of religion. This interpretation, if not always explicit, is at least implicit in the way he discusses the *geistige* significance of both religion and the state as culturally developed institutions.

Thus, for example, when he discusses the significance of worship (*Andacht* and *Cultus*), he says, "What a man believes he has to do in relation to God [in the cultic aspects of such worship] corresponds with the *Vorstellung* which he has formed of God."¹²⁵ Again, "the [Vorstellung] which a man has of God corresponds with that which he has of himself, of his freedom."¹²⁶ Hence, religious cult as an objective cultural institution and activity may be legitimately called a *Vorstellung*. Further, this *cultural* representation naturally "corresponds" to the nature of the theoretical representation human beings have of God. We therefore quite concur with Fackenheim that *Vorstellung* as implied in Hegel's understanding of religion refers "not only to the thinking aspect of religious existence, but also to religious existence as a whole."¹²⁷ Re-

ligious *Vorstellung* is more than a symbolic mode of thinking; it is also a mode of cultic activity and celebration. It is *act* as well as thought, and bodies itself forth objectively in culture as cult.

Furthermore, if the sacred institution of religious cult may be properly called a cultural *Vorstellung* of the divine, then by implication so may the secular institution of the state. "There is but one conception [Begriff] of freedom in religion and the State. . . . A nation which has a bad conception of God, has also a bad State, bad government, bad laws." 128 That is to say, the conception of the state developed by a people in its *Sittlichkeit* "represents" a certain conception of God's nature and man's ethical responsibility to him. In this connection, interestingly enough, Hegel once suggested that such a *Sittlichkeit* "is the truest cult."¹²⁹

Now since Hegel speaks of the *Begriff* of freedom and the *Begriff* of God in this context, rather than of their *Vorstellung*, my case may at first seem tenuous. I would argue in the first place, however, that Hegel's use of the term *Begriff*, like variations in the use of *Vorstellung*, is sometimes more loosely conceived than its very technical meaning in the *Logic*, where it refers to the concrete self-identity or immanent self-developing synthesis of Being and Essence.¹³⁰ He does seldom speak of *Begriff* in the plural, but there are occasions, like here, where it clearly means what we more often call subjective mental conceptions which may or may not *adequately* represent an object in this case, the "universal" objects called God, freedom and the state. In English we usually call these "ideas," with a small "i," and that is *one* meaning attached to Hegel's understanding of *Vorstellung*. If I am correct in this

interpretation, then in this particular context it makes little difference whether Hegel uses the term *Begriff* or *Vorstellung*.

Moreover, in the second place, it must be remembered that in the *ordo cognoscendi* thought first produces *Vorstellungen* which are then transformed into *Gedanken*, and finally into the *Begriff*, by the speculatively concerned thinker. *Vorstellungen* in this sense represent the pure *Begriff* and are prior to it in the existential and psychological order of cognition. *Vorstellungen*, we noted, are thus always "on the way" to becoming the full truth of an object's *Begriff*. Hence, just so, particular historical states as cultural *Vorstellungen* are not, immediately considered, the pure realization of the speculative *Idea* or *Begriff* of the State, but are concrete "representations" of its speculative truth. Notwithstanding, the *Begriff* of anything for Hegel including that of religion is implicit in the "determinate" manifestations of the *geistigen* world we know and help to create as cultural beings. But in the *ordo essendi* the *Begriff* is prior to the *Vorstellungen* which embody it. And

though in this context we have stressed cultural *Vorstellungen* as products of *man's* spiritual and rational activity, we must always keep in mind that for Hegel all human cultural or *geistige* "products" both secular and sacred are *also* a *divine* activity in us and through us. Human cultural labor is both a result of man's *willed rise to the divine*, and a *being raised by the divine*.

Given these observations, it makes little difference for the argument whether Hegel stresses that it is a bad *Begriff* or a bad *Vorstellung* of God and freedom which issues in the production of a bad state, for, epistemologically speaking, a *Begriff* is ultimately the cognitive result of prior, but now more speculatively purified, *Vorstellungen* which are implicitly instantiations of it. And if my interpretation is correct, then we can more readily and fairly interpret such initially startling statements as "The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth" 131 and "The State is Spirit which is situated in the world. . . . The state is the divine will in the sense that it is Spirit present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual [wirklichen] shape and organization of the [cultural] world."132

The point of these statements seems fairly clear: a state as produced by a people is a representation of *the State* in its *begrifflichen* truth, as it exists implicitly (*an sich*) in the mind of God. But ontologically speaking, what is *an sich* must also become *für sich*, and particular historical states are the determinate manifestations of the *an sich Begriff* of *the State*, just as particular historical religions are determinate manifestations of the *an sich Begriff* of religion. Furthermore, because God is the Spirit "who exists as Spirit in all spirits,"133 the *Begriff* of the State is also *an sich* in the mind of man and becomes *für sich* in his creation of

particular historical states. Man's creation is thus also the creation of God, just as we noted before it may be said that man's knowledge of God is also God's knowledge of himself.

Now in spite of the knotty ontological problems attaching to such a strongly immanentist understanding of the doctrine of Spirit in Hegel, problems about which I will speak more later, it nonetheless remains clear that any particular state, no more than the world itself, in its immediacy is *not* God. The state is the Divine Idea *as it exists on earth*. We must pay close attention to that qualifying phrase because this logical-ontological distinction between the Divine Idea *an sich* in God and *für sich* on earth is what makes it possible to suggest that every particular state is a cultural *representation* of man's understanding of the nature and extent of his freedom and responsibility in relation to God. To the degree this cultural representation is adequate to the *begrifflichen* truth of man's freedom and responsibility to God, it is a

good or a bad state. The state, therefore, symbolizes in a culturally objective manner what a people understands to be the relation between man and God, as well as their responsibility to both God and their fellow men arising from such an understanding.

The *an sich / für sich* distinction between cultural representations of the Divine in the *Sittlichkeit* of the State and the *Andacht* of the religious cult is, moreover, what lies behind the speculative criteriological assessments of "good" and "bad" states and "good" and "bad" religions in Hegel's thought. It also allows us to understand better the *relation* between a speculative general theory of the state and of religion. Ontologically and logically speaking the *Begriff* of both as *an sich* is *prior* to its historically determinate forms *für sich*. Moreover, in the determinate "existent shapes" of both in history, as is true of all manifestations of the Divine Idea, "the time order" in which they appear "is other than the logical order."¹³⁴ That is to say, the particularization of the *Begriff für sich* does not develop in a lock-step fashion that fails to recognize the deflecting power of historical contingencies in its manifestation even though, of course, for Hegel, the "cunning of reason" eventually outflanks such deflective contingencies "behind their back."¹³⁵

Ontologically and logically speaking, therefore, the *Begriff* of anything is the "germ" of potency which works itself out *through* its actual determinate temporal manifestations in this context, in particular states and particular religious traditions as dual representations of the *Begriff* of the Divine Idea itself. *Speculative* thought grasps the truth of the logical *Begriff* (*an sich*) in its determinate manifestations *in history* (*für sich*) as the truth of what

is actual (an und für sich). Speculative thought "overreaches" the particularizations of the representations of particular historical states and religions in comprehending the essential unity of them all in their *Begriff*an immanent unity of form and content, of universality and particularity.

The *Begriff* of anything, then, can equally well be called the origin and result of rational understanding, for the truth of the *Begriff* is the truth of the movement whereby what is *an sich* is temporally disclosed *für sich* in "existent shapes." This is why Hegel can develop a philosophy *of* right and *of* religion. The *Begriff* of both is known in advance by the philosopher, logically speaking, but it is known to him temporally speaking only as instantiated in the "existent shapes" or particularized representations of itself in history. To *this* extent, the philosopher must wait on the *fulfillment* of the *Begriff* in history *before* its essential nature is fully or adequately understood.

This progressive fulfillment through more or less adequate *representations* of the *Begriff* in cultural history cannot occur, however, until

human *self*-consciousness develops into the full awareness of man's freedom as a thinking being. With the rise of *self*-consciousness comes the awareness of man's ultimate dependence on the Absolute and his independent responsibility for transforming the world in history as a thinking being. The dual awareness of the relation of the *Begriff* of his freedom and of *God*, once having reciprocally arisen in historical consciousness, issues in the production of differing conceptions of the state in which the precise character of man's freedom as related to God is expressed. Thus, as Hegel notes, whether a state acknowledges that, practically speaking, only *one* is free, or only *some* are free, or that *all* are free, this understanding "corresponds" with the theoretical representations [Vorstellungen] that a people has of God. 136

The speculative ability to speak of a good or bad state, or a better or inferior religion presupposes, therefore, that human representations of the state and of God in the *Sittlichkeit* and *Cultus* of various nations in world history are judged from the standpoint of the *fulfilled Begriff* of each as comprehended by the philosopher. The determinate representations are judged more or less adequate to the *Begriff* in its truth understood *an und für sich*. This means, on the one hand, that all such representations, in themselves, possess implicitly, or in potency, the truth of the fulfilled *Begriff*. That is, they are "on the way" to the truth of the *Begriff*, but such representations, on the other hand, are deficient in providing an *explicit* comprehension of the *Begriff* owing to the mode *and* timing of their historical form. This deficiency, one might say, is in part a function of the deliberate and unhurried pace of the self-movement of the *Begriff* in "rounding itself out," revelationally speaking, in the history of human culture. And, in strict correlation

to this fact, it is due in part to the slowly developing clarity in man's self-consciousness as to the dignity and power of his rational nature as a free spirit both independent of, and yet also dependent on God understood as Absolute Spirit.

Hence, Hegel is assuming what theologians call progressive revelation, or, in Hegel's terms, "the path of the education of Spirit" as traversed in the history of religion. In an especially pregnant section of the LPR, Hegel writes:

The different forms or specific kinds of religion are, in one respect [i.e., logically], moments of religion in general, or of perfected religion. They have, however, an independent aspect too, for in them [the *Begriff* of] religion has developed itself in time, and historically.

Religion, in so far as it is definite, and has not as yet completed the circle of its determinateness . . . is historical religion, or a particular form of reli-

gion. Its principal [logical] moments, and also the manner in which they exist historically, being exhibited in the progress of religion from stage to stage, and in its development, there thus arises a series of forms of religion, or a history of religion.

That which is determined by means of the [Begriff] must of necessity have existed, and the religions, as they have followed upon one another, have not arisen accidentally. It is Spirit which rules inner life, and to see only chance here, after the fashion of the historical school, is absurd. 137

Historically speaking, then, man cannot know God fully until God has fully revealed himself in the concrete cultural history of religions.

Our *implicit* knowledge of the truth about God whereby man is said to be "essentially" religious is rendered *explicit* only in the passage of historical time as the *Begriff* of God in man's religious consciousness is rounded out in man's historically developing rational *self*-consciousness as a free being. And this developing self-consciousness at various stages is what produces what Hegel calls the "definite" religions. Hence,

It may be said of all religions that they are religious, and correspond with the [Begriff] of religion. At the same time, however, they do not correspond with the [Begriff], and yet they must contain it, or else they would not be religions. But the [Begriff] is present in them in different ways. At first they contain it implicitly only. These definite religions are but particular moments of the [Begriff], and for that very reason they do not correspond with it, for it does not exist in an actual shape in them.138

And Hegel goes on to argue that in Christianity, as the *true* religion, "it becomes known for the first time" what the *Begriff* of

religion is in its truth. About this, of course, I will say more in the next section.

Now the point of this discussion has been to show that the cultural *Vorstellungen* of the state and of religious cult are *both* products of man's practical concern to body forth into historical "existence" forms of *Sittlichkeit* and *Andacht* which represent man's understanding of God as the ground of all human being and meaning. This is important for understanding Hegel's general theory of culture *and* of religion, and in clarifying the way in which *every* state and *every* religion, "abstractly" speaking, may be said to be "essentially" religious in their practical manifestations in the history of culture. Contrariwise and "concretely" speaking, it nonetheless remains true for Hegel that there is no such thing as "religion in general," for it is only in the context of particular *historical* religious traditions that this necessary, but merely implicit and abstract religious consciousness, gives itself both explicit theoretical (doctrinal) and practical (cultic) form. This is but another way of insisting

that the fulfilled *Begriff* of religion, known to the speculative philosopher *of* religion, is only known *an sich* in its developing *für sich* concrete representations in history. The same point, of course, obtains for Hegel's doctrine of the State in relation to particular historical states.

Given these introductory observations about the *an und für sich* identity of the practical *Vorstellungen* of a religion and of a state, I now turn to an analysis of how Hegel also understands their functional difference.

Religion as Cultus and Gemeinde

As we have just seen, Hegel believes that all human beings are implicitly and necessarily religious in the manner by which they are driven to search out the adequate grounds for explicating the answers to the fundamental problems of thinking and acting which make human culture creative and human community possible.

While this general characterization of religion as the dialectical *Erhebung* of reflective self-consciousness is, as Hegel says, "entirely abstract," it nonetheless is methodologically "foundational" for interpreting that inevitable quest on the part of man to locate, define, and finally pay homage to that ultimate reality in terms of which alone his own personal being and meaning can be adequately understood.

Furthermore, this implicit religious self-consciousness becomes, for most human beings, an *explicit* religious self-understanding as affirmed and symbolized in some particular religious tradition and community. That is to say, there is an explicit and overt recognition of a God or gods who have *revealed* themselves to be the ultimate

ground upon which man is dependent for a proper understanding of his being and meaning in the world. In this awareness of dependency there is an explicitly thematized qualification, if not negation, of man as a wholly autonomous being. This recognition of man as a dependent and limited being whose life is to be ordered in keeping with the "revealed" truth about this deity, or these deities, produces a cultic life, a form of worship in this community appropriate to that "received" revelation.

Worship for Hegel, in its broadest compass, "includes both inwardness and outward manifestation." 139 That is to say, it involves an intentional response to the divine in man's inward and outward lifewhat Quakers would call the reciprocal process of "the inward and the outward journey." It is, however, the outward response in the cult which is the primary focus of our interest here because for Hegel it is the third "moment" in the *Begriff* of religion where the religious self-consciousness finds its practical fulfillment. To understand this it is nec-

essary to say a further word about Hegel's concept of the *Begriff* in its purely logical or formal aspect.

"There can be but one method in all science," says Hegel, "because the method is the self-unfolding [Begriff] and nothing else, and this [Begriff] is only one."¹⁴⁰ Logically, the *Begriff* in Hegel's philosophy is the pure form of the self-movement of Spirit, or God "as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a Finite Spirit."¹⁴¹ The logic of the *Begriff*, moreover, is also "the inner nature of Spirit and of the world," but considered in systematic abstraction from these, its truth appears "in the colourless cold simplicity of its own purely formal determinations"; it is "a realm of shadows."¹⁴² Nonetheless, the logic of the *Begriff* is methodologically foundational for understanding the truth of all that is actual in the world. The logic of God's pure and unified self-movement as Spirit is manifested in the constitution of all that is finitely real, for ontologically speaking, "God is the subsistence [Bestehen] of all things."¹⁴³

The logical truth of the self-movement of the *Begriff* has three distinguishable "moments" which correspond to the "moments" of God's own actuality as Spirit: the moment of identity or universality, the moment of particularity or differentiation, and the moment of individuality as the actual or fulfilled reconciliation of the other two moments.

God is self-consciousness. he knows Himself in a consciousness which is distinct from Him, which is potentially [an sich] the consciousness of God, but it is also this actuality [für sich] in that it knows its identity with God, an identity which is, however, mediated by the negation of finitude. It is this *Begriff* which constitutes the

content of religion. God is this: to distinguish Himself from Himself, to be an object for Himself, but to be in this distinguishing simply identical with HimselfSpirit.¹⁴⁴

All finite *geistigen* realities, or "objects" in the broadest sense of the term, develop themselves in their full truth in a similar fashion or by the same "rhythm." The speculative philosopher *knows* this, and that is what makes possible philosophies *of* religion, history, right, etc.

The philosophy of religion, then, is the speculative knowledge of the way by which man's inner (reflective) and outer (practical) religious life develops according to the "rhythm" of the logical *Begriff*. Hence, the *Begriff* of religion for speculative thought has as its goal and content the fully developed understanding of God as he is in himself (identity), as he exists in relation to the world as his "other" (differentiation), and as he actively over-reaches and reconciles the world as "other" to himself (concrete fulfillment or reconciliation).

From the standpoint of the formal *Begriff* of religion, then, worship in every cultic tradition signifies the third moment in this rhythmthe moment of reconciliation. This is the moment in which "the movement of God toward man, and of man toward God" is experienced concretely for the religious consciousness.¹⁴⁵ On the one hand, the sphere of worship is to be recognized as a phenomenon dependent on an act of God's coming to manreligion in all its manifestations, we have noted before, is not "produced" or "discovered" by man, but it is a divinely induced phenomenon presupposing *always* the prior act of God *in* man. In cultic worship this sense of God's prior activity in relation to man is signified concretely by the ritual of sacrifice or sacrament. Man is aware he has *received* his existence and its physical benefits as a *gift*, and so he offers back to God a tribute, a sacramental expression of gratitude. Thus, on the other hand, workshop is to be recognized as an act of man's coming to God. Man responds *actively* to God, not only by virtue of the creation of appropriate cultic ritual and specific religious observances unique to a particular religious community, but also by virtue of a dutiful attitude whereby he accepts responsibility for the transformation of the human world in keeping with that community's understanding of God and his purposes for man. In the ritual of sacrifice and sacrament this is signified by man's taking back and consuming for his sustenance what was offered up initially in tribute.

In the phenomenology of cultic worship, therefore, there is a reconciled union of grace and worksman's role in relation to God as passive and dependent is counter-balanced by his role as active and independent.¹⁴⁶ This outward practical activity in the sphere of worship is in turn a reflection of man's inward developing self-

consciousness in relation to God. The structure is, as one would expect, threefold in strict analogy with the divine *Begriff*. There is the moment of implicit unity with God, or faith, the moment of disunity wherein man knows himself as merely finite over against God as the Infinite "other," and finally the moment of awareness that this negative moment is not the final truth of the relation and that this negative moment is done away with by God himself in such a fashion that man recognizes that he shares the same essence of God as a thinking spirit. Hence,

It is this unity, reconciliation, restoration of the subject and of its self-consciousness, the positive feeling of possessing a share in, of partaking in this Absolute, and making unity with it actually one's ownthis abolition of the dualism, which constitutes the sphere of worship.¹⁴⁷

Cultic worship, them, is the third moment in man's religious consciousness wherein the double truth of his dependency and indepen-

dency in relation to God is rendered concrete. This is the *formal* truth implicit in every religious cult in history. The philosopher knows this explicitly, but each particular cultic tradition does not. To say each tradition implicitly possesses the *Begriff* is not to say it is explicitly *conscious* of the fact. Moreover, it is also to say that, *materially* speaking, not all religious traditions in their cultic expressions are equally good or true. Logically speaking, this is because, as we have seen, all definite religions do not fully "correspond" to the *Begriff*, and the correlate of this is that they are, historically speaking, only "moments" of the *Begriff* whose totality unfolds itself necessarily and developmentally in particular and historically distinct religious traditions. They are "only" moments because they are in one form or another "one-sided." That is to say, *some* moment of the truth of the *Begriff* in each is the peculiar focus at the expense of the truth of other moments.

Thus, according to Hegel's schematization 148 "natural religions" may be said to stress the immediacy of man's relation to God on the analogy of his immediate dependence on the powers of nature itself; the "religions of free subjectivity" or "spiritual individuality" stress man's relation to God on the analogy of his "natural" free subjectivity over-against and independent of the world of nature; and finally "absolute religion," which is Christianity, stresses man's relation to God based on the analogy of his being essentially a free "spirit," i.e., as made in the *imago dei*. This latter relation to God is understood as a reconciled relation which preserves, but also at the same time cancels, both the truth of man's dependence on nature and also his independence as a free subject. Both nature and spirit are here understood to be true manifestations of God, *not* in their "natural" or merely finite and contingent *immediacy* as two sides of

God's "self-othering" moment, but in their *essential* spirituality as inter-facing realms where the over-reaching and reconciling activity of God as creative Spirit is working itself out in history. Thus, "God is the Lord of the natural world and of the realm of spirit."¹⁴⁹ Absolute religion *knows* this because in it the *Begriff* of religion has fully realized itself *historically*. "It has been the work of Spirit throughout thousands of years," says Hegel, "to work out the [Begriff] of religion, and to make it the subject of consciousness."¹⁵⁰

Now the central point we have sought to make here in connection with Hegel's conception of the *Begriff* of religion is that religion as cult and community is a practical *Vorstellung* developed in strict correlation with the theoretical *Vorstellung* of God developed in reflective consciousness. The logical truth of the *Begriff* of religion is implicit in all cults and their attendant communities of faith, but, historically speaking, all such before Christianity fall short of its adequate or *explicit*

representation. The differing conception of the *true nature* of man's dependent/independent relation to God as a *free* subject is what distinguishes these cultic communities, and this in turn is reflected in the different forms of ethical life developed in a state according to these normative conceptions. 151

Furthermore, it is precisely this dialectic of dependence and independence in relation to God as present in man's universal religious consciousness which leads Hegel to distinguish between religion and the state in their cultural functions. Each is a *mode* of expressing man's relation to God, and that is why they are *an und für sich* identical. But each is also different in functionally expressing that relation. This functional difference owes itself *necessarily* to the fact that in religion the moment of *dependence* is the dominant mode of man's awareness of this relation, whereas in the state the moment of *independence* is the dominant mode of man's awareness of this relation. Formally speaking, these two moments are but two sides of the "whole" truth of man's essential nature as made in the *imago dei*, but functionally speaking, they fall apart in cultural history and experience. There develop two communities—the community of faith and the community of law. It is the functional difference between these two communities which must now be discussed.

Religion as Recht and Sittlichkeit

The explicitly religious man, i.e., the man actively belonging to a culture's dominant religious community, is a member of both communities at the same time, and this fact is what produces in him the "doubled" awareness of the sacred and profane in his

concrete cultural existence. The spirit of man, Hegel says, "moves between two sides."

The one side is that in which the spirit knows itself to be its own, where it lives in its own aims and interests, and determines itself on its own authority as independent and self-sustaining. The other side is that where the spirit recognizes a higher powerabsolute duties, duties without rights belonging to them, and what the spirit receives for the accomplishment of its duties is always regarded as grace alone. In the first instance it is the independence of the spirit which is the foundation; here [in religion] its attitude is that of humility and dependence.¹⁵²

This double movement of human consciousness finds symbolic expression in the cultural distinction between Sabbath and work week, between "sacred" times and duties and "profane" or secular times and duties.

Thus man has in his actual worldly life a number of working days during which he occupies himself with his own special interests, with worldly needs in general, and with the satisfaction of his needs; and then he has a Sabbath, when he lays all this aside, collects his thoughts, and released from absorption in finite occupations, he lives to himself and to the higher nature which is in him, to his true essential being. 153

In general, then, religion represents the "Sabbath" dimension of man's subjective mode of consciousness in his dependent relation to the Absolute and the state represents the "work-week" dimension of man's objective mode of consciousness in his independent relation to the Absolute. The "whole" truth of man's historical existence in relation to the Absolute is that he remains always dependent on God in his worldly or secular independence, and is nonetheless also at the same time responsibly independent in this recognized dependence.

"It is philosophic insight," Hegel says, "which sees that while church [or religion] and state differ in form, they do not stand opposed in content, for truth and rationality are the content of both,"¹⁵⁴ i.e., both seek to represent in objective and practical cultural forms the truth man has come to know about God's nature in relation to the world and thus about his will for man in history. Yet, Hegel insists, "while state and church are essentially one in truth of principle and disposition, it is no less essential, that, despite this unity, the distinction between their forms of consciousness should be externalized as a distinction between their special modes of existence."¹⁵⁵ Wherein precisely lies the distinction in their "forms of consciousness" and why is it "essential" this distinction

find externalized expression? And how do both, in their own separate ways, help produce and sustain the ethical life of a people?

Because man as a self-conscious being is for Hegel "essentially religious" in the passion to know rationally the absolute ground of all being, truth and value, the state as the "objective" creation of man's ethical reason is understood ultimately to "rest on religion."¹⁵⁶ That is to say, the state is able to function creatively as a public expression of binding ethical norms only when its laws are recognized by its subjects as grounded in, and hence sanctioned by the divine. This is but an expression of the fact that man's independent ethical activity in creating the state is and remains a *dependent* independence. This is the truth known by the religious consciousness as an expression of contemplative reason, and it is the function of the religious community, or communities, of a culture to bear witness to this fact. The task of the religious consciousness as expressed in cult and community

is concentrated upon God as the unrestricted principle and cause on which everything hangs. It thus involves the demand that everything else shall be

seen in this light and depend on it for corroboration, justification and verification. It is in being thus related to religion that state, laws, and duties all alike acquire for consciousness their supreme confirmation and their supreme obligatoriness, because even the state, laws, and duties are in their actuality something determinate *which passes over into a higher sphere and so into that on which it is grounded.* 157

Religion, then, as witnessing to this "higher sphere," is in this way "the groundwork which includes the ethical realm in general" and the state is the concrete, "determinate" and hence objective expression of man's ethical understanding of the Absolute grounded in his subjective religious consciousness.¹⁵⁸ So even though "the state is the divine will in the sense that it is mind (Geist) present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual shape and organization of a world," it remains *a state*, a *determinate* (read, historically finite) state grounded in "Absolute Spirit." This latter, i.e., Absolute Spirit, is the "eternally actual truth in which the contemplative reason enjoys freedom"¹⁵⁹ and the three forms of its contemplative apprehension in human culture are art, religion, and philosophy. To *this* extent Hegel understands religion to possess a "higher" authority than the state because it is essentially an expression of Absolute Mind resulting from man's contemplative focus on that which remains eternal, whereas the state, *qua particular state*, remains only a transient expression of this eternal truth of Absolute Mind.

Nonetheless, the state remains, because of its religious grounding, a kind of "secular deity"¹⁶⁰ which man is to venerate as an independent expression of man's creative reason, and hence an objective expression of God's will for man. In its true essence the state represents "the prodigious transfer of the inner into the outer,

the building of reason into the real world, and this has been the task of the world during the whole of its history."¹⁶¹ The creation of the state in history is not an arbitrary act of man's reason over against his religious consciousness, but a necessary, even if always finite, expression of it.

Genuine religion and genuine religiosity only issue from the moral life (Sittlichkeit): religion is that life rising to think, i.e., becoming aware of the free universality of its concrete essence. Only from the moral life and by the moral life is the Idea of God seen to be free Spirit: outside the ethical spirit therefore it is vain to seek for true religion and religiosity.¹⁶²

Now in spite of the fact that Hegel wants to insist on the "essential" religious foundation of the state, he equally well wants to insist on its independent rights as a secular institution over against the separate institution of *a church or religious community* within the nation-state. Ideally speaking, there *should* be no conflict between the institution of

the state and the religious institutions within it, but historically speaking conflicts *do* arise. Why? For at least two basic reasons.

The first reason has to do with the differing modes by which the authority of reason is understood to be established in the life of man. Religion has a rational content because its object or content is God as the ground of all being, truth and value. Thus, the *primary* function of a religion in human culture is to highlight the fact of man's dependency on God. Man's relation to God is here seen primarily as *passive* and the function of reason *in* the world is to be seen as *receiving* its content of truth from God *beyond* the world. Reason is understood to be normed from beyond itself. But how exactly is it normed by the religious consciousness?

I believe Hegel is suggesting that in religion man is given the conviction he has the *right* to think, whereas in the state he actually thinks *rights*. The true unity to the two would consist in the fact that man is understood to be given the right to think rights, i.e., to produce the ethical laws which norm his life. The laws of the state, then, are the expression of his own independence to produce such laws out of his *own* reason. These laws are the outward and objective expression of his inward and subjective understanding of his essential relation and likeness to God as a rational being.

Wherein then lies the potential conflict? It lies in the tendency of *a* religion or church to insist its inwardly subjective awareness of God as a religious community is privately given an understanding of ethical principles whose essential content contradicts the rationally produced *public* ethical principles of the state. Thus Hegel argues, in contrast with such a community's "subjective conviction," "the state is that which knows . . . Its principle is such

that its content is in essence . . . determinate thought." 163 One way of understanding this point is to say that Hegel is insisting that while there cannot be any *essential* contradiction between the truth of reason as "veiled" in the representational understanding of God in religious consciousness and cult, and the truth of reason as explicit or "determinate" in the ethical life of the state, the fallacy of any apparent contradiction rests in the tendency of a religious community to confuse the formal *right* to think, as divinely established in the subjective religious consciousness, with a material right to produce or think *rights* in opposition to those publicly established by the state.

Reason does not contradict itself. What religion *believes* about man's right to think, the state *knows* to be true because it *acts* on that assumption by producing a *content* in the form of laws whose justification *in history* rests solely on the self-productive power of human reason. The state, says Hegel is "a hieroglyph of the reason which reveals itself

in its actuality." 164 What religion inwardly believes about God's nature and his relation to the world and represents to itself in a form only *implicitly* rational, the state knows in an outward form as *explicitly* rational. The law of the state is reason made objective to itself.

The results of such a confusion mentioned above, therefore, issue *either* in a religion seeking to subordinate the state to its own alleged extra- or trans-rational ethical norms which means ultimately for Hegel merely subjective or arbitrary norms without objective rational justification, *or* in the weakening of the ethical fabric of a state by sectarian appeals for the right of selective obedience in the name of a "higher" private conscience. A strong state may "tolerate" some of its citizenry making such appeals, but only if those who make them (e.g., Quakers, Mennonites, etc. in the Christian West) are not too large in number. 165

This conception of the relation of a religion and a state, which of course is essentially Lutheran, 166 might make it appear that a religious community or church has no right *at all* to oppose the state and its laws in the name of a higher ethical truth. But this interpretation of Hegel's views is too simplistic, or as he puts it, "too abstract." And this brings us to the *second* reason for potential conflict between the state and a religious community i.e., the implicit tendency on *both* sides to become heteronomously authoritarian in their claims to truth and thus consider each other the enemy of truth. The most extreme form of this problem is where a state may not only consider itself an enemy of *a* religion, but religion itself, or, similarly, where a religion considers the state

a necessary evil rather than an essential rational expression of the divine will.

The issue of a heteronomous authoritarianism on the part of either here is really an expression of the problem of "positivity" the confusion of a state's or a religion's particular finite historicity with their universal essential truth as manifested by means of, but also beyond, the "accidentals" of that historicity. This is, of course, the issue to the fore in the *Jugendschriften* and we discovered there that Hegel very early recognized that in thinking of the eternal, our thinking "must be linked with *something* accidental." On the other hand, he says there, "It is quite another thing if the accidental as such . . . makes claims to imperishability, sacrosanctity, and veneration; at that point reason's right to speak of positivity does come on the scene."¹⁶⁷

This attitude is retained intact in Hegel's later speculative view of the relation of the state and religion as historical institutions. Given the two-sided truth of man's dependent independence in relation to the Absolute as symbolized functionally and institutionally in the twin realms of religion and the state, any "forgetfulness" of one side in a one-sided ex-

altation of the other produces a form of spiritual tyranny. Because in the state reason creates its content out of its own resources, the truth of its reason being dependently grounded "beyond itself" in God as Absolute Mind may easily be forgotten, and the state may fail to recognize the importance of the religious community and its cultic ritual in constantly reminding it of this fact. Religion acts as a check against wholly autonomous pretensions on the part of the state. *Any* state as grounded beyond itself in the Absolute is, in its historical particularity as a system of laws, always to be understood as transient and partially "accidental" as an expression of the Absolute.

Likewise, because in religion the claim is made to represent the truth of Absolute Mind as the unchangeable ground of all things, including the state, the religious community may fail to recognize that the essential ethical truth expressed *in* the reason of the state puts a check on its own pretensions to develop ethical norms wholly independent of or in contradiction to the "essentially divine" secular reason of the state. The state has no corner on the tendency to tyrannize the free rational creativity of the human spirit. Thus Hegel writes:

While it might seem a bitter jest to stifle all animus against [political] tyranny by asserting that the oppressed find their consolation in religion, it still must not be forgotten that religion may take a form leading to the harshest bondage in the fetters of superstition. . . . This phenomenon may at least make it evident that we ought not to speak of religion at all in general terms [i.e., as if *all* religions were equally good] and that we really need a power to protect us from it in some of its forms and to espouse against them the rights of reason and self-consciousness. 168

Actually, then, Hegel sees the ideal historical relation between the state and religion in a culture as one of functionally necessary checks and balances to avoid either's tyranny over the human spirit. To employ the terminology of Tillich,¹⁶⁹ the temptation to autonomy in the state whereby reason is employed to create structural laws of ethical life without reference to its "depth" dimension as grounded in the divine, and the temptation to heteronomy in religion whereby the *legitimate* autonomy of reason is suppressed or led captive by appeals to a norm understood as "outside" or "alien" to it, require that each institution retain an "externalized difference" over against the other. Each is capable of a form of spiritual tyranny when it succumbs to its characteristic temptation, when, as Tillich would say, each fails to recognize the rights of the other as grounded in the theonomous character of reason. Each falls prey to a form of demonic or fanatical *hubris*.

The origin of both authoritarian distortions is the failure to recognize the rational or conceptual essence of *a* state and *a* religion as distinct from the "positive" accidentality of their form which expresses that essence. The speculative philosopher *knows* this and understands that the *Begriff* of both works itself out in *momentary* particular instantiations in human history. For Hegel, of course, this instantiating process eventually culminates historically in a form of the state and of religion whose "positive" expression is nonetheless most adequate to an understanding of the true conceptual essence of each. To him, the modern Germanic constitutional state and the Protestant form of the Christian religion represent this historical culmination. Each represents the teleological fulfillment of God's self-revelation and purposes at work in the history of man's inward, subjective religious consciousness and his outward, objective ethical consciousness.

But it is important to note that even the historically particular forms of the modern Germanic constitutional state and of the Protestant Christian religion are *not* absolute *qua* their particular, positive institutional forms in nineteenth century Germanic culture. They are absolute *only insofar* as they represent the fulfillment of the *rational principle of freedom* as now *understood* by speculative thought. This rational *principle* of freedom is in fact designated by Hegel as the "*Protestant principle*" initiated by Luther.

It is sheer obstinacy, the obstinacy which does honour to mankind, to refuse to recognize in conviction anything not ratified by thought. This obstinacy is the characteristic of our epoch, besides being the principle peculiar to Protestantism. 170

Put another way, Hegel argues that Protestantism

demands that a man should only believe what he knows, that his conscience should be regarded as a holy thing that is not to be touched or interfered with. In connection with the working of divine grace man is no passive being; he himself plays an essential part and cooperates with God by exercising his subjective freedom, and in his acts of knowing, willing and believing, the presence of subjective freedom is expressly required.¹⁷¹

It is this essentially *religious principle* of subjective freedom which is absolute, and the concrete, unified realization of this principle both in the Germanic notion of a constitutional state and in the Protestant religion is signified by the fact that it is now finally *understood* "that secular pursuits are a spiritual occupation."¹⁷² But the fact that the instantiation of this principle finds its *first adequate historical expression* in the Ger-

manic cultural particularity in no way necessarily implies it has wholly or finally perfected itself there. The World Spirit had not gone into retirement in nineteenth century Germany, and the fact that Hegel clearly understood this is no better signified than by his observation that America is no doubt "the land of the future" and that "it is a land of desire for all those who are weary of the historical lumber-room of old Europe."¹⁷³ More adequate *future* realizations of the *now known* principle of freedom are eminently possible from Hegel's point of view though he is careful to acknowledge that, *speculatively* speaking, how and when this may *actually* occur is a matter which can never be historically specified in advance. The historical future is *actually open*, though it is clear Hegel believes that once *explicitly known*, the principle of subjective freedom cannot be totally "forgotten." The realization of this principle has been the goal of the World Spirit, of God, since the beginning of human history, and while there in fact may be "reversals" to previously deficient forms of the state where this principle is violated, human spiritual self-consciousness has been so altered by the explicit appearance of this principle of subjective freedom that any such reversals cannot fail *eventually* to be subverted by it.¹⁷⁴

If this interpretation of Hegel is correct, and I believe it is because of Hegel's strong emphasis on divine providence at work in history, then one must say this view of history is based on a "faith principle." It is a faith in the theonomous character of reason as an expression of the *imago dei* in man. Neither the heteronomous authoritarianism of a religion nor of a state can finally extinguish the theonomous call of reason from within itself to purge itself of its own historical distortions. To this extent, *each* institution may

serve as critic of the *other* where the *rights* of each in relation to their separate cultural function to fulfill the theonomous call of reason is denied or abrogated.¹⁷⁵ The providential principle of reconciliation which eventually triumphs over these one-sided distortions is an *ontological* principle which undergirds the theonomous passion of reason in history to overcome *all* forms of human alienation between subject and object, faith and reason, religion and state, etc. It *is* the truth of what ultimately *is*. It is a religious principle because it is the truth of God's own nature in his relation to the world. It is, in fact, the truth of the Incarnation celebrated in the cultic *Vorstellungen* of the Christian religion "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."¹⁷⁶ God and man are one in the painful, but actual, concrete realization of this abiding ontological principle *in history*.

Now in noting that the principle of subjective freedom as an expression of the incarnational truth that God and man are united in the historical task of not only producing this explicitly rational subjective

consciousness, but also of producing an explicitly rational objective *ethical life*, and in noting that this rational principle, *once* become explicitly *known* in the historical development of human religious self-consciousness, alters irrevocably man's subsequent historical destiny, we have already come straight to the question about the significance of the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth in relation to this principle. Methodologically we have arrived at the question about the way in which Hegel's general theory of religion in its theoretical and practical forms may be said to be a function of his christological convictions. It is to this question we now finally turn.

Chapter 3

Christology and Religion: The Christological Fulfillment of Religious Consciousness

The Idea, however, when it was ripe and the time was fulfilled, was able to attach itself only to Christ, and to see itself realized only in him. The nature of Spirit is still imperfectly expressed [for example] in the heroic deeds of Hercules. The history of Christ, however, is a history which belongs to the community since it is absolutely adequate to the Idea; while it is only the impulse of the Spirit toward this determination of the implicitly existing unity of the divine and human which lies at the basis of those earlier forms and can be recognized in them. . . . It is the Spirit, the indwelling Idea, which has attested Christ's mission and this is the verification for those who believed and for us who possess the developed Begriff. 1

The right of the subject's particularity, his right to be satisfied, or in other words the right of subjective freedom; is the pivot and center of the difference between antiquity and modern times. This right in its infinity is given expression in Christianity and it has become the universal effective principle of a new form of civilization.2

For the Christian world is the world of completion; the principle is fulfilled and with it the end of days has fully come. The Idea can no longer see in Christianity anything unsatisfied.3

Hegel asserts that the "infinite Idea [Idee] of the Incarnation" is the "speculative middlepoint" or "center" of the Christian view of God and his relation to the world.⁴ Since he also says that his own speculative philosophy of "the Absolute as Spirit" is "due to modern times and its religion,"⁵ and that this philosophy is "the last

development" of the speculative thought that "moves to begin with [i.e., in the Middle Ages] within the Christian religion, accepting it as its absolute presupposition,"⁶ it is clear he understands his own philosophy to be the specula-

tive expression of the fundamental truth of the *Christian* doctrine of the Incarnation, the Incarnation of God in Christ. Indeed, Hegel is not at all abashed to claim that, contrary to the way in which many of the church's "enlightened" theologians in his day sought to avoid the scandal of historic Christianity's staggering claim about the "momentous combination" [ungeheure Zusammensetzung] of the divine and human natures in Christ,⁷ his own philosophy, representing present philosophy at its zenith, was on this and other fundamental dogmatic points "not only orthodox, but orthodox *par excellence*."⁸ In this connection he writes,

If Christ is to be looked upon only as an excellent, even impeccable individual, and nothing more, the conception of the Speculative Idea of Absolute Truth is ignored. But this is the desideratum, the point from which we have to start. Make of Christ what you will, exegetically, critically, historically demonstrate as you please, how the doctrines of the church were established by Councils, attained currency as the result of this or that episcopal interest or passion, or originated in this or that quarter; let all such circumstances have been what they might the only question [of concern] is: What is the Idea or the Truth in and for itself.⁹

For Hegel, then, the speculative truth of the Absolute Religion, Christianity, whose "middlepoint" is the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ, is the *same* truth as the philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit which he sets forth. It is the truth of the Divine Idea "in and for itself," i.e., the truth of what God is in himself and in his relation to the world.

But more than that, the philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit presupposes methodologically *and* historically the faith witness of the Christian community that the Incarnation of God in Christ has

already taken place and that by means of it God and man are *actually* reconciled.

It was Christianity, by its doctrine of the Incarnation and of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers, that *first* gave to human consciousness a perfectly free relationship to the infinite and *thereby* made possible the comprehensive knowledge of mind [Geist] in its absolute infinitude.¹⁰

In this quotation Hegel presupposes that the historic orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation is the explicit affirmation of the truth that Infinite Spirit and finite spirit are not radically different or ultimately "other." The human spirit need not go *outside* of itself to find God because *qua* spirit it implicitly shares the standpoint of the infinite and so is itself essentially related to the infinite. When this truth *of* consciousness is

known *to* consciousness, spirit is at last "perfectly free" and a truly "comprehensive" philosophical understanding of the relation of finite spirit and Infinite Spirit is finally possible. With the historical appearance of Christianity this knowledge has become explicit and it is "represented" (i.e., in the mode of *Vorstellung*) by the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ. From the historical standpoint of man's developing religious self-consciousness, the reconciliation of God and man *universally* longed for in all religious traditions and only *implicitly* understood by thought, is now in Christianity *concretely fulfilled* and *made explicit* to and for thought. Thus, Christian faith, *qua* historically *Christian* and *qua* religiously *faith*, "already has the true content," i.e., the speculative Idea of the doctrine of the Incarnation, with which the philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit begins as its own presupposition and to which it then adds "the form of thought." 11

From the explicitly philosophical standpoint as a *later* speculative enterprise, then, the religious Idea of God as revealed in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is "first [given] in the element of thought" in Hegel's system because "in philosophical science the universal and more abstract must come first. In fact, however," Hegel says, "*it is later in existence.*"12 That is to say, the ability of speculative philosophy to *begin* with the truth of the Idea in the realm of thought "later" in historical existence presupposes the Idea has *already* been revealed or manifested to human consciousness in a concrete form which was "earlier" in historical existence.

It is, moreover, in Christianity by means of the doctrine of the Incarnation that the Idea of God was first fully understood as *living* Spirit. The Christian religion is "the perfect [vollendete], absolute

religion, in which it is revealed what Spirit, what God is."¹³ And to understand God incarnationally as living Spirit is also to understand him as triune because the truth of God's reconciling activity disclosed in the *historical* Incarnation is the truth of what God is in his eternal nature. It is because of this that Hegel also can say that the doctrine of the Trinity represents the "fundamental characteristic [Grundbestimmung] of the Christian religion."¹⁴ "The reconciliation believed in as being in Christ has no meaning if God is not known as Trinity."¹⁵

Given this straightforward characterization of his philosophy as a speculative attempt to reenact in the form of thought and in the form of system the truth of the Divine Idea vouchsafed in the historic witness of the Christian faith, in the doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity, it now remains for us to see how this view is linked methodologically to his general theory of religion as discussed in the previous chapter. Accordingly, we shall first discuss the link with the theoretical characteristics and

then the practical characteristics of that general theory, and the key interpretive principle will be the conception of Christianity as the consummate [vollendete] expression and clarification of man's historically developed religious consciousness.

The Theoretical Significance of the Incarnation

The discussion here will be divided into two sections. The first will focus on Hegel's christological conceptions as related to the universal incarnational principle of reconciliation. The second will concentrate on the christological conceptions which lead Hegel to affirm that in the temporal history of Christ we are given a definitive revelation of, as he calls it, "the history of God."

Christology and the Incarnational Principle

In order to understand how, from Hegel's point of view, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ completes man's theoretical or conceptual understanding of God, one must keep in mind that religion itself, understood by Hegel as an actual and essential "relation" of man to God,¹⁶ presupposes the truth of a universal incarnational principle as the origin of the religious consciousness *per se*. The assertion of a principle of an incarnational relation between God and man is therefore not unique to Christianity, for, Hegel insists, "the thought [Gedanke] of the Incarnation . . . permeates all religions."¹⁷ Hegel's general theory of religion *presupposes* that this "thought" or "idea" of the Incarnation is the essential "truth content" to which *all* religions *qua religious* witness in the form of feeling, representation and cult the latter of course, as we have seen, being peculiarly decisive in this witness. Christianity as a religion shares this implicit

presupposition with *all* religions. If this were not so, Christianity could not be understood as the *completion* of man's religious consciousness. It would appear as advocating a "strange truth" unrelated to all of man's preceding (as well as succeeding) religious history.¹⁸

Furthermore, it is this very truth content of the incarnational principle in religion which provides the factual and formal warrant for the speculative task of philosophy. A detailed analysis of this important methodological issue must await our discussion in Chapter IV, but it is important to raise this matter here in order to show how Hegel's general view that "religion can exist without philosophy" but not "philosophy"

"without religion" 19 is related to his particular view that the "final" speculative philosophy cannot arise in history without the prior appearance of the "final" religion. The incarnational principle is the methodological link between both sets of assertions.

Philosophy, Hegel over and over again insists, is the knowledge of "what *is*."²⁰ It seeks the truth of the eternal principles of reality immanently realized and disclosed in all that is finite and contingent. Its fundamental subject matter or "object," like religion, is God, for "the content of religion is absolute truth" and in religion man shares with philosophy the conviction that God is "the unrestricted principle and cause on which everything hangs."²¹ In this way "the content of religion and philosophy is the same,"²² though they differ, of course, in the form by which this common content is expressed.

But the truth of "what *is*" is the truth of the incarnational principle: the *essential* and *actual* unity of the divine and human natures as *felt, represented* and *cultically expressed* in every religion. Without this explicitly *religious* premise the speculative hope of philosophy to know God as he is in himself and in relation to the world could not and would not be realized. *Unless* man is essentially related to God religion and philosophy would represent a mere "longing" for truth about the infinite, and a speculative grasp of the infinite would never be a realizable possibility. To this extent speculative philosophy rests on the implicit assumption of the truth of the incarnational principle given in the religious consciousness.

The truth of the incarnational principle as given in the religious consciousness, however, is a *dialectical* truth. It is an essential truth whose premise is established *only* in connection with man's *lived*

existential experience of alienation. As we saw earlier, there are two "moments" in man's existential consciousness which tend to "fly apart." One is the moment of man's awareness of his infinitude as spirit and the other is the moment of his awareness of his finitude as a contingent creature. To recognize God as the ultimate reality, as the "unrestricted principle and cause on which everything hangs," is also and at the same time to recognize the *difference* between the finite and the infinite. This is a recognition which closes in on man existentially most forcefully in the anticipation and experience of physical death. Death is the universal "power of the negative"²³ experienced in *thinking consciousness* as the *Entäusserung* or *Entgegensetzung* of subject over against object (epistemologically speaking), slave over against master (socially speaking), and the finite over against the infinite (religiously speaking). Man as rational, as a thinking being, is the locus where this awareness of *Entfremdung*, this power of the negative in existence is most painfully

felt. He is the point where the positive *hope* for reconciliation and the stern negative *realities* of human existence "fly apart."

Is the hope vain and the power of the negative in existence unconquerable? No, says Hegel. Reconciliation is *already actual*. "The antithesis of subjective and objective," of man and nature, of thought and being, of finite and infinite is "implicitly overcome, and . . . it is our affair to participate in this redemption." It is a redemption witnessed to in the Christian religion by the fact that there God is "known as Love." He is known as Love, Hegel remarks parenthetically, "because in His Son, who is one with him, He has revealed himself to man as a man amongst men, and thereby redeemed them." We "participate in this redemption by laying aside our immediate subjectivity (putting off the old Adam), and learning to know God as our true and essential self," i.e., as related to him by virtue of the incarnational principle. Thus, he continues,

Just as religion and religious worship [i.e., in *Andacht* and *Cultus*] consist in overcoming the antithesis of subjectivity and objectivity, so [empirical] science too and philosophy have no other task than to overcome this antithesis by the medium of thought. 24

This suggestion as to how what religion does in cult and what philosophy does in thought are related is crucial. The epistemological confidence of speculative philosophy, which "is itself, in fact, worship [Gottesdienst],"²⁵ finds its *objective* warrant in the *fact* of religious worship as culminated in *cult*. That is to say, the truth to which such worship universally witnesses is that the painful gap between the infinite God as "other" than the world and over against man is *in fact not the final truth*. The truth is, rather,

that God himself *has* reconciled the world and man to himself, and religious worship *celebrates* that fact as implicitly accomplished and *reenacts* it by appropriate cultic forms of thought and dramatic exemplification (*Vorstellungen*).

Precisely *because* "religion is a product of the divine Spirit" in man, "a work of divine operation and creation in him" and "not a discovery of man,"²⁶ religion is the fundamental *fact* in man's *Sitz im Leben* which grounds the philosophical confidence that God may be known to thought. "God is present, omnipresent, and exists as Spirit in all spirits" that is the incarnational religious principle which accounts both for the universal dialectical *Erhebung* of all human reflective consciousness in its inward rise to the infinite and for the historical rise of cultic and conceptual traditions which seek to celebrate and re-enact the *ultimate* unity of the divine and the human spirit in the mode of *Vorstellung*.

It is in *this* sense that we must understand Hegel's statement that "re-

ligion can exist without philosophy" but not vice-versa. Religion is the existential *starting point* of philosophical reflection in dealing with the truth of reconciliation as an accomplished *fact*, and not as a mere yearning which is forever unrealizable. And this is why Hegel constantly can insist philosophy is the truth of "what *is*." The truth *is* that "God has reconciled the world unto himself," and is *continually* doing so. "Reconciliation . . . means that the opposition [the power of the negative] springs up eternally, and at the same time eternally abolishes itself, is at the same time eternal reconciliation." 27

Let us be quite clear, therefore, that for Hegel the speculative ontological assumption of an "eternal reconciliation" as the truth of "what *is*" would be "mere" speculation if there were no lived warrants in man's concrete life which would indicate that the reconciliation of subject and object, thought and being, finite and infinite *is already* implicitly accomplished and experienced. If philosophy is the investigation of the truth of what *is*, and if man's alienated existence in thought and life is not *in fact* overreached (*übergreifen*) in lived experience by God, as the religious experience of man testifies in its inward *Erhebung* and in its outward cult, then philosophy seeks a conceptual and cultural reconciliation which does not "actually" (wirklich) exist, or, at least, cannot be *demonstrated* as "actual." For Hegel, the truth of "what *is*" which philosophy seeks is a truth which is *revealed or manifested in existence*. It is not a truth achieved in "flight" from the world of existential suffering, but one found in the midst of it. It does not shun the world "in a monkish fashion."28

Thus, the *factual* warrant found in religion for what philosophy

does is also the *formal* warrant for what philosophy *is* a speculative knowledge of God as Spirit. Though religion lacks the fully adequate conceptualities which belong to philosophy, it witnesses by means of reflective and cultic *Vorstellungen* to the ontological truth to which philosophy aspires. These *Vorstellungen* in all religions implicitly and with varying adequacy witness to the incarnational truth of the unity of the divine and human natures *and* to the reconciling activity of God in the midst of man's lived sense of existential alienation. These are *ontological* truths about God's nature and his relation to the world and man *disclosed to, revealed to* the religious consciousness. They are truths which indicate the dialectical activity in terms of which God is related to the world. The finite world and man as creature are posited by God as his "other" given existence as his "other." Yet this positing as "other" is not the *final* truth of God's relation to the world, for he *also* overreaches the world as "other" to reconcile it to himself. This is the truth of "what *is*," the truth of God *known* as *living* Spirit. "God posits or lays

down the Other, and takes it up again into his eternal movement. Spirit just is what appears to itself or manifests itself; this constitutes its act, or form of action, and its life." 29

This incarnational principle of reconciliation, as we may now further characterize it, is in fact the truth of the *Begriff* of religion, and as such is also the ontological truth of the divine Idea. And it is just this truth to which philosophy aspires.

This conception of the way in which philosophy as the search for the truth of "what *is*," understood as objectively warranted by the already existing *fact* of religious experience, and as formally or conceptually warranted by the *ontological assumption* of all religious experience that God is essentially related to the world in terms of the incarnational principle of an eternal reconciliation this dual conception implicit in his general theory of religion, naturally raises the question as to *why Christianity* is assumed to be the absolute religion. And this, of course, raises the further question about the "uniqueness" of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ.

Quite simply, Christianity is the religion which renders *explicit* the truth of the divine Idea only *implicitly* understood in other religions. Its uniqueness consists in the manner in which its reflective and cultic *Vorstellungen* clarify the *implicit* truth of the divine incarnational principle of reconciliation common to all religions *qua* religious. In this sense it may be said to have only a *relative* uniqueness because it explicates a truth which is not provided by its witness alone. Yet there is a sense in which it may be said to have an *absolute* uniqueness because of the way it alone for the first time brings to *explicit* consciousness the truth of God's

nature as Spirit under the incarnational principle of reconciliation. This principle in Christianity is essentially trinitarian in its witness to God's nature as Spirit. Hegel is quite clear, however, that neither in its concept of the Incarnation nor of God as Trinity is Christianity unique in using such conceptualities,³⁰ but he insists it is unique in the way it developed cultic and creedal *Vorstellungen* which led to the perfection or completion of these conceptualities. And it is the precise way in which the *Christian* understanding of God as incarnationally related to the world in an ontological trinitarian activity was thus developed that led him to insist unabashedly that

this new principle is the axis on which the history of the world turns. This is the goal and the starting point of history. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son," is the statement of the Bible.³¹

Christianity is the absolute religion *because* in it "God has actually communicated the knowledge of himself to men."³² In it "it is revealed

what Spirit, what God is." 33 It is absolute as the consummate or fulfilled *knowledge* of God as he is in himself and in relation to the world. In it the *Begriff* of religion has reached consummate expression. And because the *Begriff* of religion has reached such a final and consummate expression, the final and consummate speculative philosophy is possible. Thus the *general* truth that philosophy cannot exist without religion is exemplified in the *particular* assertion that the "final" philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit cannot come on the scene *until* the "final" religion of Christianity has in fact appeared.

Now the *Begriff* of religion which is consummated in the Christian religion *is* the *Begriff* of God understood as the self-moving, self-diremptive and eternally creative divine Idea. In Hegel's use of these terms, the divine Idea *is* the truth of the logic of the *Begriff* *insofar as* the *Begriff* gives reality and existence to itself *within* the realm of the finite. The Idea is, in Hegel's terms, the "concrete universal," the *Begriff* "incarnate" in existence.³⁴ Thus the incarnational principle of reconciliation *is* the truth of the *Begriff* of religion, which corresponds to the *Begriff* of God as the eternally self-diremptive and self-reconciling divine Idea. Speculatively and ontologically speaking, the incarnational principle of reconciliation points to the concept of God as the subsistent "cause" of all reality who "others" a world over-against himself, while always and at once overreaching and reconciling it to himself. It is the explicit clarity with which Christianity represents this truth that constitutes it as the *revealed* religion. This incarnational truth is its "speculative middlepoint."

From the perspective of its *objective speculative content* this

explicitly clarified truth is the unique contribution of Christianity's witness in history as the "revealed" religion. Furthermore, to say Christianity is the "revealed" religion means, from the perspective of *man's subjective experience*, that in it the historically developed religious consciousness of *man* is now adequate to comprehend and express the truth of God's own *self*-knowledge. In Christianity *the nature of the religious consciousness itself* is central, and thus the Hegelian conviction that Christianity is the "revealed" religion also implies that the form and content of *human* religious consciousness in the Christian religion for the first time adequately mirrors the form and content of God's consciousness of himself as living Spirit. The *implicit* capacity of man as spirit to *know* God as he is in himself as Spirit has been at last realized *in history*. And with this eventuality a fundamental "inversion" [Verkehrung] of human historical consciousness has occurred which, as we will see later in this chapter, is destined to transform the whole course of world history. With the dawn of Christianity "a new world, a new religion, a new reality" has been decisively inaugurated.³⁵

Now let us pause a moment to see what we have established so far. Hegel's christology presupposes a doctrine of the Incarnation which is universally ontological in character. That is to say, God becomes *mangenerically*, universally, essentially. The *locus* of the Incarnation is mankind and is not just restricted ontologically speaking to *one* man. All human beings are essentially related to God and hence bear the divine image as spirit. The *purpose* of the incarnation is the realization of God's own self-knowledge *in* the self-knowledge of mankind. This realization, however, has a progressively *historical* character which accounts for the fact that Christianity is the religion which fulfills the religious quest of man to know God over the centuries. It is a product of a slowly developing historical religious consciousness and brings to consummate expression the truth of God as Spirit only dimly discerned and fragmentarily expressed in *all* religions. In this is constituted its "absoluteness" as *the* revealed religion.

The hermeneutic model under which Hegel is able to assert such a distinction-in-unity between Christianity and all other religions is *a model of evolved completion*. It is a distinction between an implicit understanding of the *Begriff* of God and an explicit one; between a less adequate set of religious *Vorstellungen* which point to the truth of God as Spirit and to the incarnational principle of reconciliation, on the one hand, and a more adequate set of such *Vorstellungen*, on the other. To this extent Hegel's christology is clearly a function of his general *theory of religion*.³⁶

But, his general theory of religion is in turn to be understood as decisively dependent on the *historical* completion of the religious understanding given in Christianity. Not until *its* appearance, as

originating in the event of Jesus understood as *the Christ*, is it possible to develop a general theory of religion. And this is so because to understand, speculatively speaking, the *Begriff* of religion by which all religions are judged as more or less adequate instantiations, one must stand on the *other* side of its historical completion.

This completion, Hegel insists, is achieved in the Christian religion. Christianity as the "revealed" religion *is* the truth of *Begriff* of the incarnational principle of reconciliation brought to explicit human self-consciousness under the *Vorstellungen* of the faith and witness of the Christian community as *originating* in the historical Christ event. To this extent, Hegel's general theory of religion is methodologically *and* historically dependent on his christological convictions. "The history of Christ," Hegel avers, "is absolutely adequate to the Idea."³⁷ This history is "the explication of the nature of God"³⁸ and "the unfolding of the divine nature itself."³⁹ And so if it is true for Hegel that the in-

carnational principle is an ontologically *universal* relation common to all human beings and not just a relation unique to that between only *one* man and God, it is also true that the incarnational principle is not *fully revealed except in one man*. Just *why* this is so and how Hegel *knows* this is so form the issue to which we now turn.

Christology and the "History of God"

When we earlier discussed Hegel's conception of the relation of *Vorstellung* to *Gedanke* and to the final speculative *Begriff*, we were laying the epistemological groundwork by which it is necessary to approach his interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ. Religion, from the standpoint of its implicit conceptual truth, is essentially representational in its manner of referring to the infinite. It is a "mixture" of sense and thought, a *sinnlich-verständige* mode of reflection. On the one hand, it is true "everything must come to us in an external way,"⁴⁰ i.e., as something which is, in the *ordo cognoscendi*, something "objective" for consciousness as mediated by sensuous intuition in perception. This constitutes the external or "positive" element in all knowing, and so "the absolute religion is undoubtedly a positive religion in the sense that everything which exists for consciousness is for it something positive."⁴¹

On the other hand, even though every religion, including Christianity as the absolute religion, first appears in a positive form, this does not mean it is "to remain in this condition, or to be a matter of *mere* [Vorstellung]. . . ." ⁴² *Per contra*,

What is to have truth for [man's] spirit, what spirit ought to believe, must not be belief in something sensuous; what is true for spirit is

something for which sensuous manifestation becomes of secondary value. Since spirit starts from the sensuous, and comes to this estimate by itself, its relation to the sensuous is at the same time a negative relation. This is a fundamental characteristic.⁴³

Thus, religious *Vorstellung* in the form of doctrinal assertions "starts" with the sensuously positive aspects of historical knowledge in a religious tradition, but it is transformed by the thinking spirit into "a content of another kind."

The object [of sensuous knowledge] has changed itself from being a sensuous, empirically existing object into a divine object. . . . This content is no longer anything sensuous . . . the object is of an entirely different nature.⁴⁴

The important point to note here is that these last two quotations dealing with the movement from the sensuous object to the knowledge of "a content of a different kind," a spiritual content which has the divine as its essential object, are taken directly from the section in the LPR where Hegel is developing his understanding of the doctrine of the Incarnation given in the Christian witness of faitha faith which "starts" from "the history of the life of Christ." Yet faith as directed toward this history "alters its meaning, that is to say, it has to do not only with faith as faith in this external history, but with the fact that this man was the Son of God." 45

What we have presented to us here by Hegel is a hermeneutic of *Christian* doctrinal *Vorstellung* about the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ which stresses at once the indispensability of the starting point in the "external history" of the "life of Christ" and yet also insists that the merely *empirical* facts of this starting point are radically "altered" by the mediating process of thinking which penetrates *beyond* them to a *spiritual* disclosure of the divine nature instantiated *in* them. The general theory of religious knowledge by which religious *Vorstellungen* are at once of both positive and negative value for speculative philosophy is thus demonstrated in the way Hegel approaches the *meaning*, the revelatory *ontological* meaning, of the Christian *Vorstellung* about the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ.

When therefore, on the one hand, Hegel asserts that "the history of Jesus Christ . . . has the Divine for its content, divine action, divine timeless events, a mode of working that is absolutely divine," and then notes that "this is the inward, the true, the substantial element

of this history, and it is just this that is the object of reason,"⁴⁶ he is emphasizing the *positive* epistemological significance of the Christian doctrinal *Vorstellung* about the historic Incarnation as that with which speculative interpretation begins. When, on the other hand, he observes that "universal laws" and "moral forces . . . do not exist for [Vorstellung] as such" because "what concerns [Vorstellung] is the narrative as it historically develops itself in the phenomenal sphere," and that in this mode of knowing the religious truth of the "inner element" has a content "which at first presents itself in a sensuous manner, a succession of actions, of sensuous determinations, which follow each other in time, and are, further, side by side in space,"⁴⁷ he is stressing as *sinnlichverständigen* the speculative epistemological *deficiency* of such a representational mode of knowing the divine.

Now for Hegel it is the "inner element" of the history of Jesus Christ as represented in Christianity's doctrinal *Vorstellung* of the Incarnation and as mediated in the realm of pure thought which is of *decisive spec-*

ulative significance. This inner element is the ontological truth of the divine nature and its relation to the worldthe truth of the divine *Begriff*, the divine *Idea*, the divine as Absolute *Spirit*. The history of Jesus Christ "is the *Begriff*, the Idea of Spirit itself . . . is the infinite history of God." 48 In this history the truth of the divine Spirit is "explicit" and "complete." It is the truth of the trinitarian incarnational principle of reconciliation where it is explicitly revealed that "God posits or lays down the Other, and takes it up again into his eternal movement."⁴⁹ It is the speculative truth of Good Friday followed by Easter Sunday, the truth represented in the Christian doctrines of crucifixion and atonement, resurrection and ascension.

To put the matter in my own terms, Hegel is arguing that the *entire* event of Jesus of Nazareth is a religiously central *paradigmatic* event by which the truth of what ultimately *is* and the truth of the *meaning* of human existence are disclosed to human consciousness.⁵⁰ If christology is the attempt to express the universal significance of the Christ event, then for Hegel this significance consists both in its ontological and anthropological "disclosure value." It functions with both mythic and existential power in human consciousness. It has mythic power because it discloses the fundamental structures of *ultimate Being* in which *human being* is located, and it has existential power because the truth of being, understood as essentially ordered by the universal incarnational principle of reconciliation, provides the grounds for human hope and courage in the face of life's apparent contradictions. It witnesses to a universal divine activity of redemption or reconciliation which teleologically "over-reaches" all such existentially endured contradictions.

To speak here of Hegel's view of the speculative revelatory significance of Jesus as the Christ as essentially mythical may seem misguided since Hegel specifically asserts that for Christianity "the history of Jesus Christ . . . is not taken merely as a myth in a figurative way, but as something perfectly historical."⁵¹ But Hegel chose to reserve the term myth for imaginative representations of the divine which do *not* originate in *actual historical happenings*. It is true, of course, that *both* "myth" (in Hegel's sense) *and* the "history of Jesus Christ" as forms of religious *Vorstellung* have *empirical* reference, i.e., both "inwardly" represent the divine by means of images which originate in our "outward" sensuous perceptions. "Everything," we remember, "must come to us in an outward way." To this extent, *everything* we know *begins* with some sort of *empirical* reference.

If we understand Hegel correctly here, however, the point he seems to want to make is that religious *Vorstellung* rooted in *historical* occurrences have the factual activity of the creative *human spirit* as their con-

tent and locus. Hegel acknowledges that mythical thinking "is the work of the imaginative reason," of *Phantasie*, so "reason is there." But it is not "thinking reason," a reason "thinking on thinking," and it is perhaps best understood (as in Schelling) as a function of man's *aesthetic* nature.⁵² Because, however, man is *spirit*, a rationally self-creative and self-directed being, it is in *man as thus functioning* in his concrete *historical* existence that the potential for explicitly rational divine self-revelation reaches its highest possibility.⁵³ And for Hegel, in the actual, "perfectly historical" life of the man Jesus of Nazareth, it reaches its highest actuality.

I think it especially important at this juncture to suggest that Hegel's view that the "history of Jesus Christ" is the "infinite history of God" represents, in more contemporary understandings of mythical thinking, a christomythic christological hermeneutic, because with the aid of this perspective much that may seem otherwise obscure or arbitrary in Hegel's speculative reenactment of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation becomes more systematically comprehensible.

We are now ready to ask a second question. If we are clearer about *why*, speculatively speaking, Hegel claims a central, even unique, religious significance for the Christ event as a consummate expression of divine self-revelation in human history, the question remains as to *how Hegel knows this to be true*.

Hegel himself suggests that

The question as to the truth of the Christian religion immediately divides itself up into two questions: 1. Is it *really* true that God does not exist apart from the Son, and that he has sent him into the world?

and 2. Was *this* [historical individual], Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son, the Son of God, the Christ?⁵⁴

He notes that these two questions are usually "mixed up together," but Hegel argues that the truth of the *first* question is not a matter solely restricted to the issue as to whether this or that particular man is the Christ. It is a truth "implicitly present in the self-consciousness of men."⁵⁵ It is the implicit truth of the ontological trinitarian incarnational principle of reconciliation as disclosed in "the progress of history, by the gradual advance of the World-Spirit."⁵⁶ The Christian religion indeed renders it *explicit*, but only as a *result* of the working out of the divine *Begriff* in pre-Christian religious consciousness" in the preceding stages of religion, and chiefly in the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman religions."⁵⁷

There is for Hegel, as Fackenheim suggests,⁵⁸ "a proto-Christian* consciousness" of the divine Idea in which there is an "instinct" which an-

ticipates "the manifestation of God as the infinite Spirit in the form of a real man." 59 This instinct is rooted in an ontological necessity whose ontological truth is not exclusively disclosed *only* to Christians who call *Jesus* the Christ. Were this not so, for example, the adoption of Greek "Logos" or Neo-Platonic "trinitarian" concepts by the church Fathers to explicate the divine nature could only be seen as a *heretical* hermeneutic act.⁶⁰ No, Christianity clarifies and consummates the truth of the ontological self-diremptive principle of the "Son" in the Godhead; it does not solely *originate* it. That is why the question about the truth as to whether or not Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ can be distinguished from the question about the truth as to whether or not the divine Idea is self-diremptive and self-reconciling in man's universal history. The latter truth as implicit universally in man's religious consciousness is in fact what grounds the universal *expectation* of the Christ. The former truth *fulfills* that expectation.

But what about the second question? How does Hegel *know* Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ? How does he *know* the speculative principle of the "Son" is finally *fully* revealed to human religious consciousness in the life of *this* particular human individual? There were indeed other persons in man's religious history who claimed or were claimed by others to be special divine messengers and individual incarnations of the divine. Nonetheless, Hegel says,

The Idea . . . when it was ripe and the time was fulfilled, was able to attach itself [sich verknüpfen] only to Christ, and to see itself realized only in him. The nature of Spirit is still imperfectly expressed [for example] in the heroic deeds of Hercules. The history of Christ, however, is a history which belongs to the community since it is absolutely adequate [schlechthin gemäss] to the Idea, while it is only

the impulse of the Spirit toward this determination of the implicitly existing unity of the divine and human which lies at the basis of those earlier forms and can be recognized in them. This [fact] is what must be understood as basic; this is the verification, the absolute proof; this is what is to be understood as the witness of the Spirit. *It is the Spirit, the indwelling Idea, which has attested Christ's mission and this is the verification for those who believed and for us who possess the developed Begriff.*⁶¹

This passage contains the epistemological "nub" of Hegel's christological commitment. Jesus of Nazareth is *known* to be the Christ, the Son of God *only* by virtue of the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum*. The *true* authority of the Christian religion as the final, absolute and revealed religion rests on this *inward* certainty of the divine Spirit, and not on a divinely inspired and infallible biblical text or on an infallible

charisma of teaching authority bestowed on a chosen few in the church. It rests on the direct, immediate inward certainty of the Holy Spirit bearing witness of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, as the one in whose whole life and fate the ontological "history" of the Divine Idea is most "adequately" disclosed. This inward certainty given by the Spirit, he says, is the final verification *both* "for those who [first] believed" in the simplicity of faith in the primitive community, *and* "for us who possess the developed *Begriff*," i.e., those who through a speculative transformation of this early unmediated simplicity of faith's witness in the mode of *Vorstellung* have rendered conceptually explicit about the divine *Begriff* what was conceptually implicit in that original witness. "In faith the true content is certainly already found, but there is still wanting to it the form of thought,"⁶² and the "us" in the quotation above who give this content its proper conceptual form refers to those who take the position of that form of "modern" philosophical idealism advocated by Hegel himself. It is only they who have "reached the profound thought . . . contained in the [Begriff]."⁶³

But in terms of this latter assertion about the privileged status of this form of "modern philosophy" in possessing a firm conceptual grasp of the divine *Begriff*, we must be reminded that this very philosophy, *historically* speaking, owes its privileged status as a "last development" to the movement of thought begun in the Middle Ages "within Christianity, accepting it as its absolute presupposition." And Hegel notes that though *some* forms of modern Enlightenment philosophy in gaining their just independence from the coercive authority of the church over their intellectual work seek to "strike religion down," it is the "last development" of genuine speculative thought to establish a new

form of reconciliation. Its task "is to do justice to faith and make peace with religion," i.e., the Christian religion.⁶⁴

While it is true, therefore, that the first question about the ontological truth of the self-diremptive and self-reconciling Divine Idea, as the divine incarnational principle of the Son, can be *logically* and *ontologically* distinguished from the second question as to the truth about Jesus of Nazareth *alone* being the Christ (because the former is after all a *universal* truth *implicit* in man's religious consciousness as such), it is also true that, *historically* speaking, it is owing to the *explicit* attestation of that ontological principle as revealed in the religious witness of the Christian community about Jesus of Nazareth as *the* Christ that such a "modern" speculative philosophy has finally been able to reach a *consummate* understanding of the self-diremptive and self-reconciling divine Idea. Precisely *because* the church recognized that the "history of Christ" was "absolutely adequate" to the divine Idea, both in the simple faith of the primitive community and in the subsequent more systematic

doctrinal elaboration of the trinitarian idea by the Church's theologians, modern philosophy has been able to rise to a final and conceptually explicit knowledge of God. And precisely *because* of this mutually shared presuppositional starting point, where truth is ultimately confirmed by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, a "peace" between modern speculative philosophy and the Christian religion is finally a realizable possibility in Hegel's time or so he believed.

Thus ends our attempt systematically to connect Hegel's view of the Incarnation with the theoretical characteristics of his general theory of religion. The dialectical *Erhebung* of reflective consciousness in the rise from the finite to the infinite is a necessary functional expression of the universal incarnational principle of reconciliation at work in the religious consciousness of all human beings. The general nature of *Vorstellung* as the peculiar mode by which all religious reflection seeks to express discursively the essentially rational content of God's self-revelation to man holds true for the particular Christian doctrinal *Vorstellung* about the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ. Both the speculative indispensability and the deficiency of thinking in the mode of *Vorstellung* are recognized with reference to the doctrinal conceptualities of the Christian religion. The unique and decisive character of these Christian *Vorstellungen*, however, is that their empirically objective historical *occasion* in the life of Jesus of Nazareth is an "absolutely adequate" expression or instantiation of the ontological incarnational truth of the divine Idea in-and-for-itself. Because of this fact, Hegel's modern speculative philosophy, moved by the inward certainty given by the divine Spirit that Christianity is thus *the* revealed religion, is enabled to arrive at a

consummately explicit conceptual knowledge of the divine nature only fragmentarily and implicitly understood before. In transforming these "absolutely adequate" Christian *Vorstellungen* into *Gedanken* and finally into the *Begriff*, modern speculative philosophy arrives at the final speculative truth that the Absolute is an eternally self-dirempting and self-reconciling Spirit teleologically at work *immanently* in all of human history.

From these considerations about the theoretical significance of the Christian view of the Incarnation in Hegel's thought, we now turn to his view of its practical significance.

The Practical Significance of the Incarnation

We noted earlier that there were two distinguishable but not ultimately separable practical expressions of man's religious consciousness

in Hegel's general theory of religion. One expression was the formation of a special religious cultic community which had as its basic purpose to celebrate the sacred dimension of man's life wherein he recognized his utter dependence on the divine for all that was necessary in order to maintain his finite existence. The other expression was the formation of a more general secular community which had as its basic purpose to develop a system of ethical rights or laws for man's worldly life wherein he accepted his independent responsibility to produce a society in conformity to the theonomous demands of his own reason. Our interest now is to see how Hegel understood the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ to have had decisive practical religious significance in shaping the human self-understanding expressed in both forms of community. To put the matter in his own words, we want to see in *Christianity*

to what particular feature [of man's understanding of the "Absolute"]
the kind of cultus corresponds and then to see how the secular self-
consciousness of what is the supreme vocation of man . . .
corresponds to the principle which constitutes [its] substance. 65

For Hegel, with the historical rise of Christianity as the "final" religion a fundamental transformation or inversion (*Umkehrung*) of man's self-consciousness has taken place. "The new religion declares itself to be a new consciousness, a consciousness of the reconciliation of man with God," and this in turn has produced "a new world, a new religion, a new reality, a world in a different condition."⁶⁶ How Hegel understands this to be so and how this conviction is specifically related to his view of the Incarnation is the issue to which we now turn.

Christology and the Life of the Church

The practical significance of the decisive self-revelation of God in Jesus as the Christ first manifests itself in the formation of a new religious community, the church. For Hegel the church

is emphatically the institution in virtue of which the persons composing it reach the truth and appropriate it for themselves, and through it the Holy Spirit comes to be in them as real, actual, and present, and has its abode in them; it means that the truth is in them, and that they are in a condition to enjoy and give active expression to the truth or Spirit, that they as individuals are those who give active expression to the Spirit.⁶⁷

The key elements in his conception are that the church is the community where the *Spirit is present* (*gegenwärtig*), and that this community lives by the *truth* which the Spirit *continues* to reveal to them. Given these conceptions and my own christological interests it is important to explore Hegel's view of the church's doctrinal and sacramental *Vorstellungen*, i.e., to explore the nature and norms of its cultic life as the final religion within human history which is destined radically to transform that history.

The first thing to be noted is that the revealed truth about God which the Christian religion possesses by virtue of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ is a truth which has a developing history. That is to say, while it is true that the "history of Christ" is absolutely adequate to the divine Idea, and that this history is the originating occasion by which the Spirit bears witness to the truth of a final reconciliation between God and man, the full theoretical and practical religious significance of that event is realized by the church only over a long period of development. To use one of Hegel's favorite analogies, just as the acorn is the oak in its potency, but requires time for its potency to actualize itself into a mature tree, so too the final religious truth nascent in the faith of the primitive community requires time for its mature theoretical and practical expression.

The key to this maturing development is the active presence of the Holy Spirit to illumine the church progressively as to the full significance of the Christ event. A "profane" interpretation of this event sees in Jesus "a mere prophet," whereas the true significance of this event as a consummate disclosure of "the Idea of Spirit

"itself" is "known through the Spirit." 68 And it is first *understood* as such at Pentecost because

. . . before this day the apostles did not possess [the understanding of] this infinite significance of Christ; they still did not know this is the infinite history of God: they had believed in him, but still not in him as this infinite truth.⁶⁹

But because the Spirit was present and working in the self-consciousness of the community, this deeper understanding of the Christ event began to develop into explicitly doctrinal, hence more rational, expression. It is "by means of the Spirit, which is present in it, [that] this community is the infinite power and authority whereby its doctrine is further developed and gets a more specific form."⁷⁰ The same sort of amplification through specification also takes place in the realm of cultic observances, especially in the sacraments. The link between *theoria* and *praxis* remains tight in the church's historically developing religious experience as led by the Spirit.

The "History of Christ" and the Church's Witness in Creed and Cult

Now it is important at this juncture to consider just how Hegel understands the relationship between the objective or historically "positive" foundation of revealed truth in the Christian religion given in the Christ event, and the subjective or inward appropriation and interpretation of that positive data by the church as progressively illumined by the Spirit. It is at bottom once again the issue of the relation of *Vorstellung* to critical thinking. It directly involves the crucial issue of biblical hermeneutics as that issue, in turn, impinges on both the church's developed creedal theological reflection beginning with the Fathers and modern philosophy's speculative task. It is, moreover, the issue of how the life of the church is related both to "the Christ who came into the world nearly two thousand years ago" and to "the present, indwelling, living Christ." 71

As one pursues this question, it must be admitted one is faced with what seem to be apparently irreconcilable if not contradictory statements by Hegel. He seems to stress, on the one hand, the *absolutely indispensable* function of the "positive" or historically factual information about the originating event of Jesus of Nazareth for disciplining the church's faith and life, and, on the other hand, the *eminently dispensable* function of just such information. For example, when he discusses the early church's struggle with the Gnostics and Docetae, he insists the church was right in rejecting the tendency to "dehistoricize" the truth of the Incarnation. The Christian view of the Incarnation requires the affirmation that the truth of the divine Idea "has been brought to culmination in subjectivity, and therewith in the sensuously

immediate singularity and contemporaneity of a human individual which appears in space and time."⁷² The error of the Gnostics and Docetae was that they

did not continue to abide in this historical form of the idea of Spirit, but they interpreted the history and disintegrated it as historical. . . . The form of immediate existence [Dasein] which is an essential moment in Christ they etherealized [verflüctigen] into a universal thought, so that the determination of the individual as a "this" [concrete individual] disappeared. . . . The Church, on the contrary, held fast to the definite form of personality as the concrete actuality.⁷³

The "two elements," therefore, which are indispensable to and inextricably connected within this Christian view are, first, the speculative truth of "the Idea itself" and then, secondly, "the form as it [the Idea] presents itself through its connection with a single individuality present

in time and space." 74 Hegel notes that for the *early* church itself "the Idea was still not, as such, to be distinguished from the history."⁷⁵ For him, however, the speculative need to *distinguish* the form and content of the incarnational event, clearly, at least here, was not to be confused with a gnostic-like attempt to *disintegrate* the intimate connection between them.

The irony of this firmly anti-gnostic position which insists the truth of the Incarnation is not to be "etherealized" or "evaporated" (verflüchtigen) into a mere "universal thought," but is tied to a "concrete" individual in history, is that in some contexts Hegel *seems* to do precisely this himself. For example, again, when Hegel attacks the then-reigning form of orthodox "apologetics," he characterizes it as

a form of reasoning which does not take to do with the content of truth in its essential nature, which only brings forward credibilities or probabilities, and instead of contemplating the truth in its essential nature is only able to conceive of it in connection with other circumstances, occurrences, and conditions.⁷⁶

These mere "probabilities" connected with "other circumstances, occurrences and conditions" have to do with the *historical* mediation of supposedly authoritative factual information about the Christ event given to us by others in the biblical materials. But, Hegel says, "if we place the divine [essential truth] in the historical, we continually get into the element of instability and want of fixed character which essentially belongs to all that is historical."⁷⁷ What does he mean by this statement?

One immediately obvious way of reading this last statement is to say that Hegel here points to the rational limitations of the science

of historical inquiry where only ranges of higher and lower probability can be attached to any present judgment about "what really happened" in the past. This fact, together with the recognition that new data is always turning up which may radically alter the degree of probability which was formerly attached to any historical judgment, is certainly part of the "element of instability and want of fixed character" which Hegel understands to characterize all historical inquiry. And this then would certainly apply to historical inquiry directed toward the biblical materials and their witness to the Christ event as the Incarnation of God. On this kind of reading, Hegel is simply drawing attention to the fact that the conviction of faith about the truth of that event is of a different order or kind than that which is demonstrable by historical inquiry. This accounts for his phrases "essential truth" and "inner meaning" as set over against "history" and its "probabilities." And it is in this context one

could perhaps understand his statement, "Make of Christ, exegetically, critically, historically, what you wish . . . [but] the sole question is, what is the Idea or the truth in and for itself." 78

This type of hermeneutic distinction applied to the biblical materials will certainly not startle any modern theologian, though that same theologian is also certainly aware that the attempts to defend this distinction logically and theologically have not been altogether satisfying.⁷⁹ The difficulty with this initial interpretation of Hegel's view of the relationship between faith and history, however, is that his further attempts to *distinguish* between the truth value of the historically factual aspect of the biblical witness and its religious meaning do at times seem in fact to come *very* near to *disintegrating* the connection altogether.⁸⁰ His position seems much more radical than this first sort of interpretation suggests. Indeed, he says mature faith is to maintain an ultimately *negative* relation to merely sensuous evidence or to an historical way of viewing things.

What is to have truth for spirit, what it ought to believe must have nothing to do with sensuous faith; what is true for spirit is something in terms of which sensuous manifestation is down-graded in value. Since spirit starts from what is sensuous, and attains to this estimate by itself, its relation to the sensuous is at the same time a negative relation. This is a fundamental characteristic.⁸¹

The immediate context for this remark is his discussion of the way in which the reported miracles of Christ are used to attest to his divinity, and he roundly rejects this approach. He even goes so far as to suggest that "curiosity of this sort" about the "factual occurrence" of these happenings "really has its origin in disbelief;

faith, however, rests on the witness of the Spirit not on [reports of] miracles, but on the absolute truth, on the eternal Idea."⁸²

This seemingly solid epistemological wedge driven between fact and meaning, between the historical data in the biblical witness to Christ and its inner meaning as related to the divine Idea, seems to open the way for a pneumatic form of biblical exegesis which *disintegrates* the revelatory normative function of the earliest historical biblical witness to Christ within the ongoing life and faith of the church. It seems to "etherealize" the historic event of Christ as there reported into a "universal thought" the Gnostic position which he also firmly rejects. In one place, for example, speaking of the scriptures as a whole, he says that

. . . narratives, which in their external shape might be repellent to the heart and understanding, can be discriminately treated by the religious sense,

which, holding fast to the substantial truth, easily vanquishes any such difficulties. 83

And commenting in another place on the fact that the "fixed Word" may be factually incorrect, as for example in Christ's misquoting the Old Testament, he notes that Spirit nevertheless "makes out of it something that is true," i.e., the truth of the divine Idea.84

I have intentionally used the word "seems" in describing the apparently incompatible emphases in Hegel's thought on this issue. I have tried to make the issue as sharp and as problematic as possible before suggesting some sort of partial resolution to the divergent tendencies of his thought in this matter. The problem can be better approached if one understands that the issue of the normative function of the external historical biblical witness to Christ as contrasted with its inner spiritual meaning as disclosed to faith (and ultimately to reason) is a function of the problem of *Vorstellung* itself. Simply put, the oscillation noted earlier between ascribing first positive and then negative significance to thought in the form of *Vorstellung* is repeated here in his oscillation between ascribing both importance and lack of importance to the distinctly historical elements linked to Christian faith and witness. All the problems intrinsic to the former issue are manifest in the latter; and that is why a resolution to this issue is destined to be as controversial as any resolution was there. Let us explore the issue of this parallelism a bit further as it pertains to the event of the Incarnation of God in Christ.

In the first place, it is unquestionably clear that according to Hegel's view the decisive revelatory and reconciling truth of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation requires that it be understood

as originating in a concrete *historical* event. Human history, the history of finite spirit, is the realm in which the divine Spirit renders itself concrete, where it progressively discloses its essence, its truth. The truth of the divine initiative in bringing about the historically consummate incarnational event is therefore firmly preserved in Hegel's view. It came in "the fulness of time."

This was not a chance time, dependent on someone's arbitrary good pleasure or sudden fancy, but determined in the essential, eternal counsel of God, that is, by the time determined in the eternal wisdom of God.⁸⁵

Moreover, this event produced a *needed* reconciliation between God and man, and the fact that what was needed was in fact provided by God indicates that this historical event was an expression of God's *love* for man.⁸⁶ Given this two-fold fact of man's need and God's essential char-

acter as loving, the incarnational event in Christ is understood as a *necessary* event.

One aspect of this necessity rests in the character of the *divine* nature, the nature of Spirit to be *eternally* active in creation and reconciliation. This is the essential truth of the divine Idea fulfilling itself according to the logic of the divine *Begriff*. God *eternally* "loves the world" and "sends" his Son to redeem it. The other aspect of the necessitythe one which is important to our discussion hererests in the character of *human* nature. If God is *fully* to reveal himself to man so that man may attain to the *true* knowledge of God, then the revelation must be suited to that method of knowing by which man as a finite creature finally attains to the true knowledge of anything. It must *begin* with sensuous perception, and it must originate in a concrete human life. Thus, for Hegel the reconciling occasion by which the implicitly existing unity of the divine and human natures is decisively clarified and confirmed

... must become an object for the worldit must *appear*, and that in the sensuous form appropriate to Spirit, which is the human. *Christ has appeared*a man who is GodGod who is man; and thereby peace and reconciliation have accrued to the world. 87

Again, this incarnational event is "unique in its kind; it can occur only once," and as a *consummate* expression of the implicit unity of the divine and human natures it must be "a unity excluding all others."⁸⁸ That is to say, Hegel insists that when a human subjectivity, a finite spirit, has *once* taken on the definitive "form of Spirit," ("once is always in the *Begriff*," he at one time cryptically remarks) it renders all previous and subsequent manifestations of Spirit relative in terms of its own perfection. It *norms* them as *their*

consummate fulfillment. This has happened *historically* in the Christ event.

What lies behind this insistence on the objectively external and historically concrete character of the incarnational event in Christ is that, first, externality or "otherness" is one of the necessary "moments" in the dialectic of consciousness itself. The finite human spirit *begins* with sensuous consciousness in the *ordo cognoscendi*. So with respect to the spiritual truth disclosed in the Incarnation of God in Christ, "spirit starts from what is sensuous" as we noted above. It does not *end* there, to be sure, for all true knowledge is ultimately *mediated* by the subject as a thinker. But in this connection Hegel is nonetheless quite clear that

The absolute religion is undoubtedly a positive religion in the sense that everything which exists for consciousness is for it something objective. Every-

thing must come to us in an outward way. What belongs to sense is thus something positive, and, to begin with, there is nothing so positive as what we have before us in immediate perception. 89

The play on the word positive here indicates the second implication behind the stress on the importance of the "moment" of externality in our coming to know the truth of the Incarnation. For Hegel the realm of the externally "positive" is the realm in which man from the standpoint of his existence as a *finite* being *first* experiences a sense of *certainty* attached to his knowing. In certain respects it is indeed a naïve certainty, more a matter of "feeling" and "faith" than of "thinking," but this initial sense of confidence, naïve though it be, produces the subjective conviction that the *object known* has a kind of objective stability and "truth" *not* ultimately dependent on the *subject's* varying or *will-kürlichen* perceptions of it. Truth for Hegel is a matter of what *actually* (wirklich) is, not merely what the particular perceiving subject *wants* it to be or *hopes* it to be or *merely* subjectively perceives it to be. Truth is what *is*, what gives itself *existence* (Dasein).

What this perspective means in this context is that *if* man is to achieve a consummate rational understanding of the implicit unity of the divine and human natures, *then* owing to the necessary manner in which all thinking reflection moves (i.e., according to the *ordo cognoscendi* from sensuous perception [Anschaung] to representation [Vorstellung], and thence to thought [Gedanke] and the concept [Begriff]), there *must* be a sensuous occasion *objectively* "adequate" to and initially productive of that final *subjective* understanding. Herein, then, lies the epistemological and hence historical *necessity* in terms of which Christianity claims the "history of Jesus Christ" is "absolutely adequate" to the divine Idea.

Hegel thus argues that the full truth of the identity of the divine and human natures has become *known* to man "in an immediate way" in Christ "as one in whom the divine and human nature are implicitly one."⁹⁰ Yes, known "in an *immediate* way" which has the conviction of "*sense* certainty" because this guarantees that the *universally hoped for* and *implicitly believed in* truth of reconciliation present in the religious consciousness is not *merely* a subjective thought *we* produce or "lay on" the world present to sense, but it is a truth which has given itself "existence" existence in "space and time."⁹¹ It is the truth of what *is* God *has* reconciled (historically) and for ever *does* reconcile (ontologically) the world unto himself. The Christ even *consummately* demonstrates that fact "objectively" in the realm of "external" space and time.

This much of the parallelism between the problem of *Vorstellung* as a

"mixture" of sense and understanding and a "middle" between a true objectivity and mere subjectivity on the way to truth, and the problem of the relation of the positive or historical aspects of Christian witness to Christ and their inner meaning as disclosed to faith, can now be stated: just as sensuous experience and the images recollected therefrom were said by Hegel necessarily to *occasion, inform* and later retroactively *confirm* the essential truth about God given in the "middle-mixture" mode of *Vorstellung* in general, so our "sensuous" knowledge of the "history of Christ" necessarily occasions, informs and confirms the *consummate* truth about God given in the "middle-mixture" *Vorstellung* of the Christian religion. While not finally sufficient *qua merely* sensuous or "positive" for producing the conviction of faith, this external history is nonetheless the necessary epistemological *starting point* in terms of which Spirit mediates to us the inner meaning of its consummate truth as an "absolutely adequate" revelation of the divine Idea. To *this* extent, at least, the Christ event forever *norms* the faith and witness of the Christian community in an objective and hence "historical" manner.

To shore up our interpretation here we must now hasten to add also that it is not just the bare fact *that* a man appears "who is God" which is definitive for the Christian concept of the Incarnation. Hegel, like many of us, would not know what a "bare fact" is apart from some concrete descriptive or positive content. No, the historical *form* which that fact took is also indispensable to the normative function it has within the church. The *universal* truth of the unity of the divine and human natures has become factually *concrete* in *this* man, in Jesus of Nazareth, in this particular *individual*.

Another way of putting the point I think Hegel wants to make is that the concrete particularity of Christ's historical life (i.e., with respect to his most characteristic attitudes toward life as reflected in his deeds and teachings) was *transparent* to the universal truth of the divine Idea. The *form* by which the concrete particularity was actualized in *this* man as a spiritual *individual* was thus "absolutely adequate," because personally and characteristically "transparent," to the universal truth of the divine Idea. The phrase "was actualized" points on the one hand to the superintending work of divine providence *in* him (he was divinely "chosen" to fulfill this purpose) and on the other hand to freely chosen actions *by* him (he characteristically "chose" to respond in his deeds and teachings to the demands of his "higher" spiritual nature). What is revelationally decisive in this process is that he thus became the consummately explicit *paradigm* of the way in which all human beings must and do find reconciliation with God, the way in which the *implicit* unity of the divine and human becomes explicitly realized. Hence, Hegel says, "be-

cause man is in himself the image of God, but in existence is only natural, that which is implicit must be evolved, while the first natural condition must be abrogated (*aufgehoben*)."⁹² This "evolved" process requires man to "renounce" his "natural will, knowledge and existence." He adds,

This requirement relating to [man's] naturalness is exhibited in Christ's suffering and death, and in his resurrection and elevation to the right hand of the Father. Christ became a perfect man [*vollkommenen Mensch*], endured the fate of all men, death. He suffered, sacrificed himself, negated his naturalness, and thereby elevated himself above it. In him this process, this conversion of his other-being [natural finitude] into spirit, and the necessity of the pain in the renunciation of naturalness is exhibited. This pain, however, that God himself is dead, is the birthplace of holiness and of elevation to God. This is what must come to pass in the subjectthis process, this conversion of the finiteis known in itself as accomplished in Christ.⁹³

The point we wish to make in including this quotation is not just to show that Hegel has retained a concept of the *imitatio Christi* in his view of Christ's normatively paradigmatic significance for the church, but that this concept *requires* some knowledge of *historical facts* about Christ for him to so function in the life of faith. The emphasis, of course, falls on his death and sufferings, but the larger principle behind this event is that he "gave up his natural existence," his "natural will and knowledge." This is how he became a "perfect" or complete mannot just to the extreme *extent* by which this humanity was affirmed (death), but in the *form* of his spiritual attitude disclosed historically toward *all* of life. It was, we remember, the *whole* range of his "history" which is asserted to be

absolutely "adequate" to the divine Idea. His history represents "finitude in *all* its forms."⁹⁴

Yet Hegel does see in Christ's death the *consummate* expression of this yielding up man's "natural will." It is, he says, "the touchstone [Prufstein] . . . by means of which faith verifies its belief." Thus,

Christ's death primarily means that Christ was the God-Man, the God who had at the same time human nature, even unto death. It is the lot of finite humanity to die; death is the most complete proof of humanity.⁹⁵

For Hegel the speculative significance of Christ's death, that God himself "is dead," as a Lutheran hymn put it, is that it

. . . expresses the truth that the human, the finite, frailty, weakness, the negative, is itself a divine moment, is in God himself; that otherness or

Other-Being, the finite, the negative, is not outside of God, and that in its character as otherness it does not hinder unity with God; otherness, the negation, is consciously known to be a moment of the Divine nature. The highest knowledge of the nature of the Idea of Spirit is contained in this thought. 96

This, of course, is also the truth of the trinitarian principle of incarnational reconciliation whereby God is shown to *be* reconciled with the world.

The reconciliation believed in as being in Christ has no meaning if God is not known as Trinity, if it is not recognized that He *is*, but is at the same time the Other, the self-differentiating, the Other in the sense that this Other is God Himself and has potentially the divine Nature in it, and that the abolishing [aufheben] of this difference, of this otherness, this return, this love, is Spirit.97

The "history" of Christ, then, as consummated in the renunciation of his "natural will" in death, is an ontological paradigm of the truth about God's eternal nature as related to the world. *But* it is also the paradigm which defines the possibility of reconciliation for all men, and those who recognize and appropriate the saving truth of this self-renunciation as there disclosed constitute the church.

Christman as man in whom the unity of God and man has appeared, has in his death, *and his history generally*, himself presented the eternal history of God's history which every man has to accomplish in himself, in order to exist as Spirit, or to become a child of God, a citizen of his kingdom. The followers of Christ who combine on this principle and live in the spiritual life as their aim, form the church which is the Kingdom of God. "Where two or three are gathered in my name" (i.e., "in the definition of that which I am"), says Christ, "there I am in the midst of them." The community is a real [wirkliches], present life in the Spirit of Christ.98

Moreover, and finally, the "permanent preservation" of this community "is itself the eternal repetition of the life, passion, and resurrection of Christ," and this preservation is *cultically* celebrated and normed in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is said to be "the central point of Christian doctrine."⁹⁹

Now the point of these several quotations is to show that both the *fact* and *form* of Christ's *human history* is unequivocally indispensable to the church's witness to its revelationally normative significance as given to faith. Whatever *else* one discovers as problematic in Hegel's view, and there is much, his view is that this history is the "starting

point" for the normative understanding of faith's witness to its "inner truth" given by the Spirit. It has a necessary, even though not sufficient function in normatively disciplining the community's cultic life and doctrinal affirmations. The "positive" history of Christ's life shapes the cultic and doctrinal *Vorstellungen* which peculiarly characterize the Christian religion. The mode of this *Vorstellung*, as all religious *Vorstellung*, is not yet an expression of pure thought, but pure thought *needs* this set of *Vorstellungen* related to Christ's life as definitive "examples" of what that pure thought, or rational truth, *means* as demonstrated *in existence*. Under the guiding influence of the Spirit, the final revelatory truth of this event is discerned by speculative thought in the "passing back and forth" from *this* set of *Vorstellungen* to the divine *Begriff*. *This* set of *Vorstellungen* is "absolutely adequate" for this possibility and this result. The "sensuous elements" in it may be "turned into a content of another kind," the purely rational or spiritual meaning, as we saw earlier, but it is a "turning into" which cancels *and* preserves at the same time. It is a process of *Aufhebung*. This aspect of Hegel's view, of the relation of historical fact and religious meaning in connection with Christ's life, then, coincides with the positive significance of all *Vorstellung* as *dependent* on sensuous experience.

But what of the other side of the relation the *independence* of thought in relation to *Vorstellung*? The *deficiency* in it? It is here we must fit all those *other* statements which speak of the historical aspects of Christ's life as apparently *inessential* to the conviction of faith and to speculative knowledge. "Conviction," Hegel says,

whether in the form of faith or knowledge based on thought, certainly takes its start from something outside, with instruction and what is

learned, from authority, but it is essentially a self-remembering of spirit in itself. 100

The phrase "a self-remembering of spirit" gives us another key by which to help resolve the problem we have been discussing.

Hegel's fundamental epistemology is thoroughly Platonic, or if you will, Socratic. He insists man "is potentially spirit, the truth lies in him, and what has to be done is merely to bring it to consciousness," i.e., *explicit* consciousness.¹⁰¹ In the opening pages of the LPR Hegel notes that ". . . it is not the concern of philosophy to produce religion in any individual." Rather,

its existence is, on the contrary, presupposed as forming what is fundamental in every one. So far as man's essential nature is concerned, nothing new is to be introduced into him. To try to do this would be as absurd as to give

a dog printed writings to chew, under the idea that in this way you could put mind [Geist] into it. 102

What this means is that all religious truth, *including* the divine incarnational principle of reconciliation as decisively manifest in the Christ event, is a truth *already* present in man's universal religious consciousness *per se*. It is *implicitly* present, though not explicitly so. What is required is a factual *occasion* to mediate in the form of explicit consciousness that as yet only implicitly given consciousness of our inner immediate relation to God. But the *knowledge* of what I truly am in relation to God and he to me is "mediated only by means of the object." Hence, ". . . if knowledge be actual (wirklich), be real, we have then what knows and what is known."103

In the case of *actual* religious knowledge as revealed by God, then, there is a synthesis of external and internal elements. The external elements, consisting of historically related "circumstances and doctrines," are one side of the revelational structure. These elements, says Hegel,

are not of a chance character, they are not accidental, *but are essential*; they undoubtedly have to do with an external relation, but this relation is not nonessential on account of its being external.104

On the other hand, there is an internal element in terms of which it is recognized that the external elements, as the *essential occasions* of such knowledge, are not *sufficient* to produce the final inner *conviction* of spiritual truth as disclosed to *faith*. This recognition, to which "it is essential we should hold fast," involves the truth

that positive revelation cannot supply a religion in such a way that it could have the character of something mechanically produced, of

something effected [merely] from the outside, and set up within man by an external agency.

Here the old saying of Plato is in place, that man learns nothing, he only remembers. . . .¹⁰⁵

Though this Platonic conception rests on a "mythical" idea that we "remember" from a preceding state, it nonetheless

involves the thought that religion, justice [Recht], morality [Sittlichkeit], all that is spiritual, is only aroused in man; he is potentially spirit, the truth lies in him, and what is to be done is merely to bring it into consciousness.

Spirit bears witness to spirit; this witness is the peculiar inner nature of spirit. In this weighty idea is involved that religion is not brought into man

from the outside, but *lies hidden in himself*, in his reason, in his freedom, in fact. 106

Now if we take Hegel seriously when he says that the conception that *actual* religious knowledge has a necessary and essential external positive element which functions as the *occasion* by which our already implicit and *ultimately self-authenticating* awareness of the truth about God is *explicitly* mediated, we are in a far better position to deal systematically with all those statements which assert the apparently *inessential* character of the historical facts connected with the "inner meaning" of the Christ event. From the standpoint of our *implicit* and *essential* religious consciousness of God "nothing new" is introduced by *any* sort of "historical" data, including data relating to Christ's personal "history." As a *pre-reflective* knowledge it is based on an *immediate* relation to God. On the other hand, because man is a finite being his reflective consciousness is a *mediating process* by which the data of sensuous perceptions act as *occasions* for a developing explicit awareness of the truth of that immediate and essential relation. Thus, the "data" of Christ's personal history provoke, arouse, and *do* occasion the reflective development of that implicit consciousness we have of God's nature and his relation to the world.¹⁰⁷ From the standpoint of man's historically developing religious consciousness, therefore, something "new" *is* introduced in this event. A new "occasion" has appeared in history which *qua* external has an "inner meaning" with which the *outward* form is *wholly, absolutely* compatible. *This* historical occasion is "absolutely adequate" to the truth of the divine Idea. The cultic and doctrinal *Vorstellung* of this religion, as originating with the sensuous "images" recollected inwardly from this event, make possible a reflective inner "passage" from implicit

truth to explicit truth about God with a consummate adequacy nowhere else available in history. *Historically* speaking, therefore, this event is "necessary" for the revelational realization of a consummately explicit knowledge of God, and in this function it is "unique" in kind. It is, in fact, the *goal* of all world history. As we noted earlier, the triune incarnational character of God as the "inner meaning" disclosed in *this* event

is the axis around which world history is rotated. Up to this point and from this point history proceeds. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son," is the statement of the Bible.¹⁰⁸

Hegel, of course, is quite clear that this event may be encountered and understood *merely* historically, *merely* in an "external" way. *Unless*

this event is "met" with an existentially serious religious concern, one in which we are open *to* the witness of the Spirit and one in which we recognize the self-authenticating witness *of* the Spirit in our own spirit as to its "inner meaning," the event retains only a "profane" significance. Christ remains "misunderstood" as "merely a prophet."

That it however has the significance which we [as Christians and philosophers] assign to it is known through the Spirit, for the Spirit is quite certainly explicit in this history. This history is the *Begriff*, the Idea of Spirit itself, and world history has found in it its fulfillment [Vollendung] by knowing the true in this immediate manner. 109

In this connection Hegel can say that "we find what we look for,"¹¹⁰ and his insistence on the indispensability of the *inner* witness of the Spirit as linked to the *external* data helps to clarify what in some contexts seems to be a very gnostic form of arbitrarily pneumatic exegesis of the Bible. "The words of the Bible," Hegel says, "are a statement of truth which is not systematic, they are Christianity as it appeared in the beginning; it is Spirit which grasps the content, which unfolds its meaning."¹¹¹ The doctrinal *Vorstellung* of the Christian faith is implicitly given in it "in a positive way." The Bible is nonetheless the "chief basis" [Hauptgrundlage], *external* basis, *by which* the Spirit "produces a responsive chord" in the believer about the decisive revelation given to us in Christ. It gives "firmness to his convictions" about the abiding truth of that event.¹¹²

Nonetheless, by stating that the textual witness to Christ produces a *responsive chord* in us, Hegel holds fast to the principle that the essential *meaning* of the text, its spiritual and rational content, is

ultimately produced "by nothing than what is already in me." This ultimate meaning

. . . must conform to my subjective judgment [Entscheidung], to the requirements of my knowledge [Wissen], my reflective knowledge [Erkenen], and just because I make it clear to myself I make my subjective idea [Vorstellung], my thought [Gedanke] valid therein. Otherwise it is something which is dead, external, which is not [meaningfully] present [vorhanden] for me at all.¹¹³

This inner requirement for meaning is also to be understood as a function of the inner witness of the Spirit in our spirit, for, says Hegel, Christ himself says in the text, "He [the Spirit] will guide you into all truth." Thus, the true revelational meaning of the Christ event was not,

even at the outset, a function of direct acquaintance with Christ and his words.

It was only to be after him, and after his teaching through the text, that the Spirit was to come into the apostles, and that they were to become full of the Spirit. It might almost be said that when Christianity is carried back to its first appearing, it is brought down to the level of unspirituality, for Christ himself says that the Spirit will not come until he himself has departed. 114

At that first appearing, Hegel says, the apostles saw him and believed in him "only as the Messiah" or as "a mere teacher." 115 To them "he is a present man whom they perceive by the senses, and who does not yet hold to them the relationship of the Holy Ghost." "If he thus be made as God to man, God in the heart of man," says Hegel, "he cannot have a sensuous and immediate form" and so "the sensuous and present form must disappear, so that it may be taken into . . . the realm of representation [Vorstellung]; then for the first time can the spiritual consciousness, the spiritual relation enter in." 116

Now this form of exposition is absolutely intriguing because it opens up (and mixes up!) several key Hegelian principles of interpretation which are central to our problem. First of all, it is an example of the way Hegel uses (assumed!) historical data *about* Christ's life and death, his teachings and his deeds, to argue his point about the insufficiency of those data! The truth about the *ultimate* meaning of his life as a matter given *only* inwardly is argued on the basis of the truth Christ himself supposedly taught historically about his necessary disappearance *from* history. Thus, this particular historical fact *qua external* is employed as

paradigmatically revelatory of a universal epistemological principle about the manner in which the conviction of faith *qua internal* is ultimately achieved. As Christ the sensuously immediate historical man was at death necessarily *outwardly* removed from the earliest disciples in order that Spirit might render him *inward* to faith in his essential revelatory truth and as a *living* presence, just so, *our* merely historical knowledge of this event, as *merely* external, is transformed by the Spirit into truth "of another kind" i.e., the spiritual and rational meaning as the decisive and final revelation of God to man about his own nature and relation to the world. But even this argument about the inessentiality, or what now might better be called the insufficiency of *mere* historical knowledge about this event, is a *function* of just such knowledge. If such knowledge is *transcended* epistemologically, it is also at once necessarily *preserved*. Those who fail to see this important point in Hegel's position here will always end up making him into a crypto-Gnostic to

whom historical knowledge of Christ is epistemologically unrelated to its speculative or inner meaning.

Secondly, both the importance and the deficiency of religious *Vorstellung* about the historic incarnation of God in Christ are preserved in this exposition. Of the importance we have spoken before. The deficiency can now finally be better clarified in the light of the exposition we reproduced above. When Hegel suggests "the sensuous and present form must disappear" in order to be "taken up into *Vorstellung*" so that a truly *spiritual* relation to that event may be achieved, he is pointing to that phase of the process of *Vorstellung* where thought is "mixed" with sense in the inwardizing activity of reflection. That is to say, *Vorstellung* is a manifestation of reason "certain of itself" in the way it "transforms" sensuously recollected objects according to the *rational interest* of the reflecting subject. Here the sensuously re-collected images or objects are the *external* data of the Christ event in history. And here the emphasis is on the power of the subject's reason brought inwardly *to* the data. The emphasis is also on the religious interest of the subject—the interest in *knowing* God. The universal and implicit religious awareness of the truth of the divine incarnational principle of reconciliation is seeking an "example," an "occasion" by which it may become explicit in the form of pure thought. To this extent the "truth" which *results* is always a "self-remembering" of the subject. The "example" or "occasion" does not produce the religious consciousness nor can it produce the conviction of certainty or truth. *That* is always a function of *Spirit* witnessing to spirit. It is an inwardly *universal* function.

This insufficiency of the *merely* historical data of the Christ event

for producing the revelatory truth of its inner meaning without the clarifying witness of Spirit is thus an expression of the deficiency of *Vorstellung* itself as a "middle" mode of reflective knowledge. To understand this we must keep in mind what Hegel understands to be the objective and subjective deficiency of *Vorstellung* as it affects religious knowledge or our knowledge of God. A *Vorstellung* of "God" is a case of knowing where the *content* originates in thought but the *form* in which it is represented is sensuous. The objective deficiency here is that the sensuous *form* under which God is represented is inadequate for expressing the purely rational content. That is to say, it is inadequate not *only* because we are made dependent on something outside of ourselves "other" than pure thought in order to cognize a truth of pure thought (we would thus lose our sense of the inner certainty of self-sufficient rational freedom), and not *only* because of a necessary analogical incommensurability in the use of finite empirical objects to represent an infinite object (God is not an "object" which can be empirically encountered by our physical

senses), but *also* because the *merely* sensuous form of knowing *anything* is inadequate.

The sensuous *form* of knowing even the objects of the finite world is governed by reason in the form of *Verstand*. As we saw earlier, it is a knowing in the mode of analytic differences in the way objects "appear" immediately to the senses. These differences in the form of an object's appearance are *real*. They are really "out there" in the object, but these analytically perceived differences as specified by *Verstand* are only "moments" of appearance which *also* point beyond themselves to the essential truth of the object itself as a dialectical *inner* unity of unity and disunity. It is this that *Vernunft* knows. *Vernunft* knows the dialectical inner truth of objects, whereas *Verstand* knows objects in the form of differences which present themselves empirically as one-after-another characteristics connected in outward space and time by a mere "also." This *merely* analytic function of *Verstand* which "stops" or "lingers" at this form of knowing is, then, the subjective side of the deficiency of knowledge in the form of *Vorstellung*.

This should sound familiar by now, and the application of these conceptions to the problem we are exploring should begin to appear more obvious. *Historical* knowledge is a form of knowledge rooted in the mode of knowing characterizing *Verstand*. To know the Christ event *merely* historically, merely in its "positive" form, is to know it as unpenetrated by the power of *Vernunft*, by the native power of reason in its speculative and religious function. It is *not* to know its "inner meaning" as a revelation of God who is Spirit. On the other hand, *as* a sensuously given external *occasion* for reflective consciousness "on the way" to a self-remembering of the

truth of Spirit, this event possesses *in itself* an "inner meaning" or "truth" which strikes "a responsive chord" with the truth about God as Spirit which we *implicitly* bring with us in our encounter with the event. In the religious *Vorstellungen* arising from that event the *merely* historical character of that event is inwardly transformed into "a content of another kind," an implicitly *vernünftigen* content, a content of and for our spiritual consciousness.

When Hegel, therefore, in certain contexts insists that the "historical" and the "positive" data related to the Christ event are ultimately inessential to the conviction of faith, are "spiritless," and that faith has an essentially "negative" attitude toward them, we must understand he refers to them understood either as merely *immediately* present to the senses or as analytically dissected in a "lifeless" or "spiritless" manner by reflective knowing in the mode of *Verstand*. The *essential* truth about *any* object present to consciousness in terms of that kind of merely immediately perceived data or that kind of lifeless analytic reflection connected

with it is never *ultimately* adequate for or essential to the deeper knowledge of *Vernunft*. Faith has the "instinct" of this deeper reason in it, and that is why religion and philosophy, faith and reason are never in conflict when this is properly understood. The instinct of reason operating in faith under the witness of the Spirit inwardly transforms merely immediate sensuous data and the lifeless analytic understanding (which orders their initial reflective mediation) into an implicit *vernünftigen* spiritual content. It produces this content in the form of religious *Vorstellungen*, and this is why speculative philosophy *begins* with them to make their implicit *vernünftigen* content explicit in the form of *pure* thought.

For Hegel, then, Christian religious *Vorstellung* in both cultic and doctrinal forms, from the standpoint of pure speculative knowledge, "hovers" between "sense and thought." As an historical community, Christianity "hovers" between an inwardized recollection of "positive" data about the history of Christ which was the temporally prior revelatory occasion in which it has its origin, and an implicitly rational inner transformation of that data's religious *meaning* under the present witness of the Spirit. This "meaning" is what characterizes the community's sense of the *gegenwärtigen Christi* as distinguished from "the Christ of two thousand years ago." The *gegenwärtige Christi* is the inner truth of that *past* event experienced *now* by the believer as a consummate clarification of his *own* already implicit knowledge of God.

But to distinguish historical data from religious meaning is not to disintegrate the connection. From the standpoint of the conviction of faith, of our implicit inner spiritual consciousness of our essential and immediate relation to God, the historical data of the

Christ event long ago do not *produce* that consciousness nor, *qua* historical, provide criteria for guaranteeing the conviction that *this* event is unique in adequacy as an occasion for consummately clarifying that consciousness. These are wholly *inward* matters understood by the Spirit's witness to our spirits. To *this* extent these data are inessential to faith. From the standpoint of the development of our *actual consciousness*, our finitely reflecting consciousness, however, these data *are* essential. They are essential *both* as an external occasion by which the truth of that self-remembered consciousness is developmentally set in motion within us, *and* as an example by which the truth about God and our and the world's relation to him then *self-consciously* recollected is confirmed. It is confirmed as a truth which is not something which exists *merely* as a *thought* or *in* our thought, but as something which is disclosed in existence, as something *actual* in reality itself *before* we came to *know* it (personally and historically) and *before* the "creation" of finite spirit and nature (ontologically).

In "passing back and forth" from Christian religious *Vorstellung*, which has inwardized and incipiently transformed rationally that at first merely external data of the Christ event, *pure* thought and *final* speculative knowledge of God finds an absolutely adequate occasion which provokes an absolutely adequate example which confirms the self-remembered truth of the divine incarnational principle of reconciliation forever at work historically *and* ontologically in finite existence.

Such, then, is our attempt to understand Hegel's confusing and complex statements about the relation of historical data and religious meaning in terms of the Christ eventan event which norms not only the faith of the community in cult and doctrine, but also all of human history in man's quest for speculative truth. About this latter point more will be said in the section to follow. What we have attempted to do in this section, however, is to show that in Hegel's christology historical information about the Christ event has an indispensably necessary function in the development of the church's doctrine and cultic worship. Such information is not ultimately sufficient for guaranteeing the conviction of faith that he was indeed the Christ, and historical inquiry has independent rights for sifting that data for factual inconsistencies as reported by the early church. But Hegel is apparently convinced that such sifting will not erode the basic outline or form of Christ's most characteristic responses to liferesponses which serve as a paradigm of man's highest possibility of spiritual obedience to God. It is this paradigmatic form of spirituality which faith and fully developed speculative reason understand to be the "final" revelation of God's incarnational relation to man. It is also a paradigm of man's "courage to be" in the face of the sense of alienation attaching to

his merely finite natural consciousness. Hegel's position seeks to avoid both a gnostic and an historically reductionistic interpretation of the Christ event. Religious meaning and historical data are distinguished, but not disconnected in his position. Whatever obvious methodological problems remain in his position on this issue, at least *this* much must be recognized in terms of his intention.

The "Idea of Christianity" and the Era of the Spirit

Now we must round out our investigation in terms of the church's developing understanding of that originating event as normative for its faith and life. The *epistemologically* paradigmatic argument Hegel advanced above as to the reason why the physically present Christ had to be "taken away" from the earliest disciples before they could enter into a truly inward spiritual relation to him as guided by the later witness of the Spirit, *also* functions as an *historically* paradigmatic warrant for his

insistence that it is only in the *ongoing* life of the church that the implicit incarnational truth of that past "external" event is progressively rendered more and more *explicit*. What this means is that for Hegel the *ultimate* authority for establishing the truth of Christianity as the "final" religion is the witness of the Spirit in the ongoing life of the community. The final form of the truth of what he calls the "Idea of Christianity" 117 is not given explicitly in its "first appearance" during the first century or in its earliest "textual" form in the biblical materials. It is a truth *developed*, rendered more and more explicit, in the church's inward spiritual and rational reflection about the universal significance of the originating eventreflection which took place under the illuminating witness of the Spirit.

This development of progressively rational understanding has for Hegel a kind of rough "trinitarian" periodization attached to it. The doctrinal reflections of the early Fathers, lasting to the time of the Middle Ages, can be characterized as the "era of the Father." It is during this time that the trinitarian conceptualities were being worked out in such a way that the Christ event was perceived as disclosing the truth of the *eternal* nature of God as the self-moving divine Idea. It is during this period that the church "borrowed" or "transplanted" into its doctrinal *Vorstellung* the philosophical conceptualities provided by Neo-Platonic thought about the self-dirempting divine Idea. If someone complains that this was a *bad* move on the part of the church, as Harnack¹¹⁸ and many other thinkers before and since have suggested, Hegel's answer is unequivocal.

It is a matter of perfect indifference where a thing originated; the only question is: "Is it true in and for itself?" . . . Whether a Christian

doctrine stands exactly thus or thus in the Bible the point to which the exegetical scholars of modern times devote all their attention is not the only question. The Letter kills, the Spirit makes alive: this they say themselves, yet pervert the sentiment by taking the *Understanding* [Verstand] for the *Spirit*. It was the church that recognized and established the doctrines in question i.e., the Spirit of the Church.¹¹⁹

Yet the church *modified* the Greek conception in the process of borrowing it. It added to the speculative conception that "the abstractly divine [Idea] breaks up and has broken up within itself" the principle that in Christ this self-diremptive and self-reconciling process *within the divine Idea* is also disclosed to be a self-concretizing and self-reconciling process actualized *within finite existence*, within concrete human history. The former is the "abstract" truth of the ontological trinity and the latter the truth of the "concrete" economic trinity. "So," Hegel writes,

"in order to recognize what the principle of Christianity is as truth, the truth of the Idea of Spirit as *concrete* Spirit must be recognized, and this is the form [of understanding the divine Idea] peculiar to the Church Fathers." 120 This in fact is the speculative revelatory truth behind the church's insistence that the divinity of Christ is inextricably connected to the fact "that Christ has been an actual 'this' man. This 'this,'" he says, is recognized as "the momentous moment in Christianity because it is the binding together of the most colossal opposites [Gegensätze]." And he immediately adds, "This *higher Vorstellung* is not found in the text, cannot be lying at hand [vorhanden] in the first manifestation." 121 That is to say, it is not as a speculative truth there made *explicit*. Further reflection as to its deeper religious and speculative truth is required under the guidance of the Spirit. The data there "at hand" must be further "mixed" with thought in a "higher" doctrinal representation in the creedal expressions of "orthodoxy."

The second periodization in Hegel's conception runs from the Middle Ages to the Protestant Reformation. This is the "era of the Son" in which the "pain" of the moment of God's creative "othering" now becomes dominant in the church's historical experience. In the former period it was the eternal *unity* of the divine and human in Christ which was dominant in the development of Christian doctrine and cult. Here it is the element of *division* between the divine and human in Christ which finds dominant expression. The impetus to internal spiritual unity which accrued from the church's initially being "outside" or in opposition to the life of the state in the Roman Empire had allowed a suppression of an essential ambiguity which was at work in the origins of the community itself. This was its call given by Christ to

"renounce" the natural world, the natural state of consciousness in the name of a higher vocation dedicated to *inner* spirituality. But when the church "won" the Empire and became the officially sanctioned religion this ambiguity surfaced in a kind of spiritual bifurcation of consciousness.

With the rise of the power of the bishops and the Pope *over* the world, the Church *became* the world *itself*. The sense of contradiction between the secular and the sacred as originally *internalized* by the community now was *externalized* in the life of the culture over which it responsibly presided. The life of man was divided up between his "natural" and "supernatural" relationships and responsibilities, and this sense of "division" in life and consciousness is represented in the rigid distinctions between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, grace and nature, church and state, priest and king (or emperor) as imposed under the church's authority. The dialectical tension between man's immediately natural and his inwardized spiritual life was frozen in the medieval

form of an "unhappy consciousness." The implicit truth of reconciliation as inwardly experienced by the church was not yet explicitly realized in man's worldly life. The "secular" life of man as a citizen of the state was downgraded in the light of his "sacred" life as a member of the church. This divided consciousness, moreover, was reflected in the conceptions of doctrine and cult, e.g., in the view of the sacraments as "supernatural" means of grace dispensed by a special priestly hierarchy claiming an unchallengeable divine authority and infallibility. In man's religious consciousness the moment of God's "awful" otherness as the transcendent *Jenseits* who stands over against man's natural finite existence was painfully dominant.

These "dark ages" of the church in which the human spirit was "crucified" nonetheless led to a new era, the third periodization which began with the Lutheran Reformation and which issued ultimately in the Enlightenment critique of the Christian religion itself. If the human spirit in the Middle Ages may be represented as the "crucified" Christ, then in this era, Hegel says, it "comes forth from the grave" in the "era of the Spirit."¹²² Figuratively speaking, during the Middle Ages the world of secular life was being partially "elevated" to a more spiritual dignity, "to heaven" as it were even though it had a lesser dignity than that accorded to "supernatural" elements in man's life. On the other hand, man's sacred or religious life was "brought down" from "heaven" into contact with his natural or secular life.¹²³ In the third era a reconciled balance between the rights of man's secular and religious life is begun to be restored, for, Hegel says, ". . . in the Protestant Church the reconciliation of religion with legal right has taken place. In the Protestant world there is no sacred, no religious

conscience in a state of separation from, or perhaps even hostility to secular right."¹²⁴ "In the Protestant Church," he says, "the entire life its activity generally is the field for what it deems religious works."¹²⁵

For Hegel, the "essence" of the Reformation is that "Man is in his very nature destined to be free."¹²⁶ He sees this expressed in Luther's conception of subjective freedom in which the principle of man's religious bondage to the sensuously external is "abrogated" by the inward principle of "faith and spiritual enjoyment [Glaube und Genuss]."¹²⁷ The church had become corrupt on the basis of the former principle and that corruption was "natural" and not simply "accidental."

The principle of that corruption is to be looked for in the fact that the specific and definite embodiment of Deity which it recognizes, is sensuous that the external in a coarse material form, is enshrined in its inmost being.¹²⁸

This reduction of spirituality to external and even superstititious formulae in creed and cult was a function, he suggests, of a preoccupation from the start with the merely sensuous aspects of the Christ event as something "outside" the believer which are now past and gone. The Crusades of the middle ages were also an expression of this endemic tendency to "go back" to Palestine to confirm the conviction of faith. In contrast to all this, he says,

. . . we find a simple Monk looking for that specific embodiment of Deity which Christendom had formerly sought in an earthly sepulchre of stone, rather in the deeper abyss of the Absolute Ideality of all that is sensuous and external in the Spirit and the heart. 129

Luther's "simple doctrine," then, abrogates this principle of dependence on the sensuously external as the ultimate authority on which faith rests. Putting it negatively, he says that it "is not the recognition of a sensuous object as God, nor even of something merely conceived, and which is not actual and present, but of a reality that is not sensuous," i.e., the *inwardly* actual and present (*gegenwärtigen*) "object" of faith which is the living Christ.¹³⁰ But one must be quite clear that Hegel understands that this Lutheran principle of abrogation *preserves* the sensuous *forms* of Christian cultic sacraments while it also *cancels* their *mere* externality. This is why he understands the classic problem of the eucharistic controversies between the Catholic and Reformed churches as the central issue "in which the whole question is concentrated."¹³¹

The Eucharist, says Hegel, is *preserved* in its sensuous forms by Luther, but he reinterpreted its spiritual meaning as to how the believer by it is related to Christ. Against the Reformed position, he denied the Eucharist was merely a "commemoration" of a *past*

event, which Hegel himself suggests is a position which "expresses a merely moral relation," i.e., Christ is reduced to an example of virtue present in historical memory.¹³² While Luther preserved the "substance of Catholicism," he argued against the Catholic position of *ex opere operato* where Christ is present in the sacrament only after an act of priestly consecration and is passively consumed as an objective or external form of grace independent of the condition of the believer's "heart."¹³³ In the Lutheran position the *reciprocal* relation between the importance of outward form as disclosing an *objective* truth and the indispensability of the subject's *inward* willingness to receive and obey the truth there disclosed is preserved. It is well to let Hegel speak for himself here in three substantive passages.

Each [person] has to accomplish the work of reconciliation in his own soul. Subjective spirit has to receive the Spirit of Truth into itself, and give it a dwelling place there. Thus that absolute inwardness of soul which pertains to religion itself and freedom in the Church are both secured. Subjectivity therefore makes the objective purport of Christianity, i.e., the doctrine of the Church [as expressed in cult], its own. In the Lutheran Church the subjective feeling and the conviction of the individual is regarded as equally necessary with the objective side of truth. Truth with Lutherans is not a finished and completed thing; the subject himself must be imbued with truth, surrendering his particular being in exchange for the substantial truth, and making that truth his own. Thus subjective spirit gains emancipation in the truth, abnegates its particularity and comes to itself in realizing the truth of its being. Thus Christian freedom is actualized. 134

According to the Lutheran conception [Vorstellung] the [sacramental] movement starts from something external which is an ordinary common thing, but the act of communion takes place and the inner feeling of the presence of God arises to the extent to which, and in so far as, the externality is eaten not simply in a corporeal fashion, but in spirit and faith. It is only in spirit and in faith that we have the present God. The sensible presence is in itself nothing, nor does consecration make the host into an object worthy of adoration; but, on the contrary, the object exists in faith only, and thus it is in the consuming and destroying of the sensuous that we have union with God and the consciousness of this union of the subject with God. 135

The process of salvation takes place in the heart and spirit alone The Spirit of Christ actually fills the human heart. Christ is therefore not to be taken merely as an historical person, but man has an immediate relation to him in spirit. Here the idea of the presence of Christ is no longer grasped in a sensuous manner but in spirit alone. In the Supper man is recalled to his unity with God. 136

Now in spite of what I think is a far too superficial and pejorative interpretation of the Reformed and Catholic views of the Eucharist, it is important to see how Hegel uses this interpretation of Luther and Lutheranism to clarify the revolutionary transformation of man's religious, speculative and practical life in the modern world. The transformation is an expression of what he calls "the Protestant principle" as a permeating impetus in all of Western culture since. It is the principle of spiritual inwardness whereby *every* man is understood to possess in his own essential being as a thinking subject (by virtue of the inward witness of the Spirit to his spirit) the potentiality for discerning and actualizing truththat is to say, truth about God's nature and his relation to the world (which is characterized by his sense of dependence upon God) and truth

about himself as a free spiritual subject (which is characterized by his sense of independent responsibility for transforming the world as a divine agent).

Religiously speaking, this principle requires not only "the reconstruction of all doctrines," but also a practical transformation of the ideal of personal holiness. Because *every* man possesses the potentiality of spiritual truth in his essential being, the whole monastic ideal of a "higher" holiness is undercut. *Every* man is now understood to be a priest. The three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are seen to be contradictions of the *true* life of holiness which is now seen to be exercised in the realm of *Sittlichkeit*. The Christian as set free in Christ is now free to exercise responsibility over and in the world. In this concept of holiness,

The divine spirit must immanently pervade the worldly. . . . But that concrete indwelling is constituted by the formations of the ethical life . . . : the ethical life of marriage against the holiness of the unmarried estate, the ethical life of wealth and earning activity against the holiness of poverty and its idleness, the ethical life of obedience dedicated to the right of the state against the holiness of obedience without right or duty, the bondage of the conscience. 137

Speculatively speaking, this principle is what connects Hegel's philosophy of Absolute Idealism to both "modern times and its religion," i.e., the Enlightenment and the rise of Protestant Christendom. It does so both epistemologically and ontologically. As to the first, Hegel says

It is a sheer obstinacy, the obstinacy which does honor to mankind, to refuse to recognize in [any philosophical or religious] conviction anything not ratified by thought. This obstinacy is the characteristic of our epoch, besides being the principle peculiar to Protestantism.

What Luther initiated as faith in feeling and in the witness of the Spirit, is precisely what spirit, since become more mature, has striven to apprehend in the concept [Begriff] in order to free and so to find itself in the world as it exists today.¹³⁸

As to the second, this principle is linked to the doctrine of the "living Christ" present to the believer under the witness of the Spirit in the Eucharist, and this means that

... the Divine Nature [is] not in any sense an *other-world* existence [ein Jenseits], but [is] in unity with human nature in the present [Gegenwart]. . . .¹³⁹

This implies that in the worship of Christian cult and in its doctrinal formulations the ontological truth of the universal incarnational principle of

reconciliation is consummately represented and constantly *re-*presented, and this is the principle which characterizes the speculative *Begriff* which allows modern philosophy to take its "rise."

Practically speaking, the Protestant principle reorders the conception of the relation between the sacred and secular dimensions of man's historical life. It concedes the justice and ethics of a state "as independent and substantial." 140

The development and advance of [the human] Spirit from the time of the Reformation onwards consists in this, that Spirit, having now gained the consciousness of its freedom, through that process of mediation which takes place between man and Godthat is, in the full recognition of the objective process as the existence of the divine essence [i.e., in recognition of the dialectical incarnational principle]now takes it [freedom] up and follows it out in building up the edifice of secular relations. . . . [It] involves the recognition of the Secular as capable of being an embodiment of Truth. . . . It is now perceived that Morality [Sittlichkeit] and Justice [Recht] in the State are also divine and commanded by God, and that in point of substance there is nothing higher or more sacred.141

This conception of the principle's function as disclosing the truth of "Christian freedom" is, he says, "the banner of free spirit, independent, though finding its life in the Truth, and enjoying independence *only in it*," i.e., as contrasted with a merely finite, natural, or idiosyncratic and arbitrary subjective "freedom."

This is the banner under which we serve, and which we bear. Time, since that epoch [the Reformation], has had no other work to do than the formal imbuing of the world with this principle, in bringing the

reconciliation *implicit* [in Christianity from the start] into objective and *explicit* realization.¹⁴²

This brings us directly and quite naturally to the next section on the relation of christology to secular life. In this present section on christology and the life of the church I have sought to show, in terms of his general theory of religion, how Hegel understands the historical Christ event to norm the church's initial and developing doctrinal and cultic *Vorstellung* in representing "that being known as the Absolute." I also sought to show how he understands it to norm the believer's spiritual idea of religious consciousness and faith. Explanations of his ideas on the unique paradigmatic importance of Christian *Vorstellung* as related to speculative knowledge, on the believer's immediate relation in faith and sacrament to the *gegenwärtigen Christi*, and on the believer's need

to practice the "imitatio Christi" were essential to this task. We now turn, according to his own formula, to the issue of "how the secular self-consciousness . . . of what is the supreme vocation of man . . . corresponds to the principle which constitutes the substance of a religion." 143

Christology, Secular Life and World History

In the previous chapter we discussed at some length Hegel's conception of the relation of religion and state, noting that the "identity" he saw in them had to do with their common roots in man's reason, reason in its theonomous expression. The "difference" between them in their cultural function we saw ultimately as a distinction between religion's independent responsibility to the state in reminding it that the *right to think* is a right to be exercised with a sense of dependence on God, and the state's independent responsibility to fulfill its divinely sanctioned mission *to think rights* independent of any authority except reason itself. That analysis in fact *presupposed* that the truth of this identity-in-difference between the two was itself a clarification which was brought to mature or consummate expression in Protestant Christendom. It was a truth implicit in Christianity from the beginning, but its explicit realization did not arrive until the emergence of Germanic-Lutheran culture. Thus, Hegel writes that with the appearance of the "Germanic world" there occurred "an entirely *new spirit*, through which the world was to be regeneratedthe free spirit, *viz.*, which reposes on itselfthe resolute self-will of subjectivity."¹⁴⁴ In *this* world the essential truth of the "Christian" principle finds matured expression as the "Protestant principle" and this principle norms the truth of the identity-in-

difference between religion and the state, or secular life generally, which Hegel develops. What is needed now is to connect Hegel's christological conceptions with this position. To do this it is necessary to look at his conception of world history as a "theodicy" of Spirit and his conception of freedom. The two conceptions are intimately linked.

Freedom, Theodicy and Philosophy of History

For Hegel, "the history of the world is nothing but the development of the Idea of freedom."¹⁴⁵ What this means in Hegel's terms is that the divine Spirit is actively engaged in history in "educating" the human spirit toward responsible and creative freedom in the use of reason. Philosophy, he says,

concerns itself only with the glory of the Idea mirroring itself in the history of the world. Philosophy escapes from the weary strife of passions that agitate the surface of society into the calm region of contemplation; that which interests it is the recognition of the process of development which the Idea has passed through in realizing itself.i.e., the Idea of freedom, whose reality is the consciousness of freedom and nothing short of it. 146

He concludes the LPH with this statement:

That world history is this developing process and the actual becoming of Spirit, under the changing spectacle of its historiesthis is the genuine theodicy, the justification of God in history. Only this insight can reconcile Spirit with world history and actuality, so that what *has happened and happens every day* is not only not without God, but essentially the work of his own self.147

"What *has* happened and happens *every day*"in this conviction both the historically processive and ontologically teleological aspects of the divine incarnational principle of reconciliation are apparent in his view of human history as "the great day's work of Spirit."148 The *goal* of history is the conscious realization of freedom and the essence of freedom is "self-contained existence" [Bei-sich-selbst-sein]self-contained because

if I am dependent, my being is referred to something else which I am not. . . I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence of spirit is none other than self-consciousnessconsciousness of one's own being.149

To use my own terms here, the realization of freedom is the realization of the unity of the divine and human nature in terms of man's implicit rational essence and explicit rational activity. Man attains his freedom when he realizes that the truth of the world, of

God and of himself is a *self*-produced truth whose authority is *self*-confirming in the principles of his *own* reason. To *know* that explicitly is freedom. *Not* to know that is to remain "dependent" on something else "other" than himself for his principle of authority, and that dependence is what produces the sense of existential alienation within and between human beings which fractures and hobbles free rational creativity in cultural history.

Historically speaking, man's escape from this "natural" condition of alienation has been slow and painful, but it *has* been teleologically ordered by God. Hegel is quite aware of "the panorama of sin and suffering that history unfolds"¹⁵⁰ and that a survey of

... the miseries that have overwhelmed the noblest of nations and polities, and the finest exemplars of private virtue, forms a picture of most fearful as-

pect, and excites emotions of the profoundest and most hopeless sadness, counterbalanced by no consolatory result. 151

Yet he insists that such a survey is in the end too superficial. The writing of history in relation to such phenomena is indeed an "empirical" discipline,¹⁵² but it is also an "interpretive" discipline, which means the historian always employs orderly principles of rational evaluation in analyzing his empirical data. Thus he "is by no means passive as regards the exercise of his thinking powers. He brings his categories with him, and sees the phenomena presented to his mental vision exclusively through these [category] media." To this extent, then, Hegel insists that "to him who looks upon the world rationally, the world in its turn presents a rational aspect. The relation is mutual."¹⁵³ Reason seeks to penetrate to the *essential* truth and meaning of the *otherwise* ambiguous historical panorama where sin and suffering appear to have no "purpose." Thus, he argues, even to those who regard history as merely "the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals have been victimized, the question involuntarily arises to what principle, to what final aim these enormous sacrifices have been offered."¹⁵⁴ The question "involuntarily" arises, he believes, as a *necessity* of reason which can find no satisfaction apart from some conception of end or purpose to the process. Man, we remember, "is a born metaphysician."

The question about an adequate interpretive principle is the issue of a *philosophy* of history. For Hegel the key interpretive principle is the principle of man's essential spiritual freedom in terms of which the successive appearance of world empires (as ethically concrete

nation-states) are judged as more or less adequate expressions. The impetus of this principle's realization is at work everywhere "in germ" in man's history, but, as with the *Begriff* of religion, the *Begriff* of freedom reaches a historical consummation in principle at least.¹⁵⁵ It is reached in the Germanic world in the formation of a constitutionally ordered state where *all* men (not just *one* man as in the Oriental world, or just *some* men as in the Graeco-Roman world) are recognized as free.¹⁵⁶ And the Germanic world is in its religious essence the *Christian* world. This Germanic-Christian world is "the world of completion: the principle [of subjective spiritual freedom] is fulfilled, and with it the end of days has fully come. The Idea can no longer see in [the Protestant form of] Christianity anything unsatisfied."¹⁵⁷ In *this* world it is finally recognized that secular pursuits are essentially religious activities expressions of an historically independent reason rooted dependently in the essentially contemplative reason of religious consciousness, a con-

sciousness which knows God to be the ultimate source of enablement by which all that man freely and rationally creates in history is made possible. Thus he can say that

The [cultural] process displayed in history is only the manifestation of religion as human reasonthe production of the religious principle which dwells in the heart of man, under the form of secular freedom.

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Hegel recognizes, of course, that this historical development toward the full consciousness of man's rational freedom involves a *reciprocal* action on the part of God and man, a "cooperation" which is one of the truths manifest in the Lutheran conception of the Eucharistic celebration we noted earlier. The variations of human response to the divine self-revelation of Spirit introduce the category of contingency into history (contingency, for Hegel is a *necessary* category in correctly understanding the dialectic of historical process), but in the end he "bites the bullet" theologically and insists that the "final aim" behind all history is "God's purpose" a purpose which cannot *fail* of realization. That is "the only pole of repose amid the ceaseless change of events and conditions, and the *sole efficient principle* that pervades them."¹⁵⁹ That for Hegel is the *meaning* of the doctrine of providence. The idea of providence necessarily implies a teleological principle at work in history and to believe in providence is, philosophically speaking, to believe that divine reason is the *ultimate* principle operating behind and within all that occurs in man's historical existence.¹⁶⁰

For Hegel, the two central elements necessary for developing a comprehensive philosophy of history are a recognition of the truth

of the divine Idea as eternally "mirrored" in the historical process and the complex human passions as the temporal vehicles for its teleological instantiation or incarnation"the one the warp, the other the woof of the vast arras-web of universal history. The concrete mean and union of the two is ethical freedom in the state [die sittliche Freiheit am Staate]."¹⁶¹ States are produced or founded out of the "passions" of what Hegel calls "world-historical individuals."¹⁶² He concedes the word "passion" [Leidenschaft] is not quite adequate for what he wants to say about the motive force behind the historical work of these individuals, but he uses it

understanding thereby the particular bent of character, as far as the peculiarities of volition are not limited to private interest, but supply the impelling and actuating force for accomplishing deeds shared in by the community at large.¹⁶³

These personages, of which Caesar, Alexander and Napoleon are examples, may be called "heroes," not because they are always *moral* men (i.e., personally virtuous as private individuals), but because

they have derived their purposes and their vocation . . . from a concealed fountain which has not attained to phenomenal, present existence from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which impinging on the outer world as on a shell, bursts it in pieces, because it is another kernel than that which belonged to the shell in question.

164

They are *agents* of the World-Spirit and *behind* their merely private passions there is at work in their historical passion to conquer and rule the "cunning of reason," operating as it were, "behind their back."¹⁶⁵ They are in fact a troubled lot because they are moved by a force larger than themselves a force they did not produce nor one which they can fully control. Hence, they attain "no calm enjoyment; their whole life [is] labor and trouble; their whole nature [is] nought else but their master-passion. When their object is attained they fall off like empty hulls from the kernel."¹⁶⁶

What they produce, however, are new empires and new socio-ethical systems in which the principle of free rational spirituality is slowly developed. From Hegel's point of view, "the history of the world travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of history, Asia the beginning."¹⁶⁷ The four periodizations in which this principle is matured constitute the Oriental, Greek, Roman and Germanic worlds. The fourth periodization "begins with the [spiritual] reconciliation presented in Christianity; but only in the germ, without national or political development."¹⁶⁸ It comes to

this latter fulfillment in the Germanic culture of Hegel's time and the principle of *inward* spiritual freedom developed by Luther as the "Protestant principle" is, through the "secular" Enlightenment, finally developed into the principle of *external* ethical freedom in modern constitutional government. The root of both the religious and secular development in this last era is thus the principle of free subjectivity, and that is the principle which finds its initial origin in the Christian religion.

The right of the subject's particularity, his right to be satisfied, or in other words the right of subjective freedom, is the pivot and center of the difference between antiquity and modern times. This right in its infinity is given expression in Christianity and it has become the universal effective principle of a new form of civilization [Form der Welt].¹⁶⁹

From the standpoint of ethical life the principle requires that *all* men shall be treated as *ends* and not as mere *means*. The *individual* is sacrosanct, not in his merely arbitrary or idiosyncratic particularity, but in his essential character as made in the *imago dei*, as *human*. It is thus the purpose of a constitutional state to *recognize* that fact and to protect the *rights* of the individual even protecting him from his own misadventures as contradicting his own essential nature. Hegel's theory of criminal punishment, for example, is predicated on the assumption that the criminal has the *right* to be penalized because the punishment is a way of insisting that the criminal has broken the law of his own essential nature as embodied in the ethical life of the statea state which he has helped produce as a free individual. He has sinned against himself and needs to be reconciled to himself. The state is the reconciling and mediating agent in this process. It is in this way a *divine* agent.

Now this very abbreviated survey of Hegel's conception of world history as the development toward *this* conception of human nature and its creative ethical potential in secular life is meant to serve our christological interests and is not by any means adequate to the extensive treatment Hegel gives to this issue.¹⁷⁰ The point we want to make is that *this* conception of history requires an explicit christological premise. It requires the premise that "the history of religions coincides with the world-history,"¹⁷¹ and that means it is not *until* the final religion has made possible the final speculative philosophy, of which philosophy of history is a part, that such an interpretation can be explicitly realized as *true*. Not until the truth of the divine Idea is made consummately *explicit* in man's religious self-consciousness can one "bring it" as a speculative "category" to the phenomena of history in order to interpret its essential meaning

aright. And the rational truth of the divine Idea as *itself* Free Spirit, as both transcendently and eternally self-purposive ontologically "beyond" history, and also and at once immanently and temporally self-purposive "within" history, reconciling all "otherness" to itself, is a truth initially disclosed "in germ" with the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. In the events of his life, as "absolutely adequate" to the divine Idea, man is given a new principle for understanding the triune nature of the divine Spirit and its relation to the world. "This new principle is the axis on which the history of the world turns. This is the goal and the starting point of history."¹⁷² It is the "goal" of history as *ordained by God*. It is the "starting point" for a *philosophy of history* which recognizes the principle of freedom as finally finding its consummate expression in the modern world of Protestant-Germanic culture. History as God intended it to be, as an explicit realization of man's implicit rational freedom, both inwardly as religious and outwardly as

secular, "starts" with the arrival of this event. Slowly and painfully in the history of the Western world, this new understanding of the incarnational unity of the divine and human natures as disclosed in the Christ event becomes the "effective principle" of a new form of civilization Christendom. With it, "the end of days has fully come."

Protestantism, Germany and "The End of Days"

Or has it? Hegel's philosophy of history developed on the basis of the christologically normed interpretive principle of subjective rational freedom as matured finally in the religious and secular life of Protestant Christendom has at *first* reading the ring of a realized grand eschatological optimism. It seems to smack of that form of "culture Protestantism" against which Neo-orthodox theology raged its fiercest critique. Yet this first reading is deceptive, even if partially accurate. There is no doubt, for example, that Hegel believed, at least *in principle*, that in the modern Protestant state "the realm of fact has discarded its barbarity and unrighteous caprice, while the realm of truth has abandoned the world of [the] beyond and its arbitrary force." 173 That is to say, empirical knowing and religious knowing have found a new way, to borrow a phrase from Isaiah, to "lie down together" in peaceful cooperation under the mutually disciplining principle of free rational subjectivity. The preparation for this was begun in the Middle Ages when speculative thought was united with Christian faith, "accepting it as its absolute presupposition." Later, however, "when the wings of thought have grown strong," i.e., in the modern world, philosophy rises to the sun like a young eagle, a bird of prey which strikes religion down. But it is the last development of speculative thought to do justice to faith and make peace with religion. 174

Speculative thought, Hegel's, sees this peace-making principle at work *in the present cultural reality of the Protestant state* and hence demonstrates this reconciliation *in thought*. Were this reconciliation *not* present in man's *actual Sitz im Leben*, philosophy could not demonstrate it in the realm of *thought*. Philosophy is the science of what *is*, what is actual, not merely what is *hoped* for.

But exactly *where* is it present? It is present, I suggest, in the implicit but as yet only *germinal* confidence of the church and the state in the divine power of human reason itself. What the speculative philosopher knows in thought may not *yet* have found *complete* expression in the *totality* of cultural life, i.e., may not have achieved perfect institution-

alization in all cultural forms, religious or secular. But it must be *actually* there at work, at least in principle, in germ. There must be at least harbinger expressions of the actual truth of the reconciliation between faith and reason, church and state, and it is in this sense Hegel remains true to his "realist" conviction that the truth philosophy knows is not acquired by a transcendent "flight" from the world, but by a disciplined and immanent exploration "of" the world. Were this principle not maintained, Hegel's philosophy would suffer an irreparable internal contradiction. After all, philosophy has no business in telling us what the world ought to be.

Philosophy . . . always comes on the scene too late to give [such instruction]. As the thought *of* the world, it appears only when actuality is *already there* cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed. . . . When philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's grey in grey in cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk. 175

It should be noted, however, that the suggestion that the reconciliation Hegel asserts must be present at least "in germ" in the actual world does not rest easily with the statement here that the truth philosophy knows always arrives after the world in which it is instantiated is "cut and dried," "completed" and "grown old."

It must be further conceded, moreover, that Fackenheim is quite true to the textual evidence when he says Hegel "is by no means as certain as is commonly supposed that this unity of truth and fact is as, after all, it must be *itself* fact, or that the future will manifest what the present does not."¹⁷⁶ There is a "discordant note" sounded in the closing paragraphs of the LPR, and no gain is made

in trying to avoid the problem it poses for an attempted partial rescue of the incipient crack in Hegel's final speculative position at this point. The discordant note is that the speculative justification of "the unity of the outer and inner no longer exists in immediate consciousness, in the world of reality."¹⁷⁷ The "process of decay" Hegel sees occurring is likened to the spiritual decay of the Roman Empire, and church and state now seem to have abandoned their confidence in the divine nature of free, and yet disciplined subjective rational freedom. "Moral views, individual opinion and conviction without objective truth, have attained authority, and the pursuit of private rights and enjoyment is the order of the day."¹⁷⁸ The "end of days" appears to have come and gone!

But did it ever *really* come *at all*? Will it in fact *ever* come, or come *again*? Here the whole Hegelian system seems to wobble unstably on its presuppositional axis. On the one hand, the reconciliation of faith and

reason, church and state, religion and secular life had to be "completed" before speculative philosophy could know it as *actual*, before the Hegelian Owl of Minerva could fly. On the other hand, if it *has* been completed, and if this was the consummate historical fruit of the revelational insight given in Christianity as the "final" religion, an insight which produced his own "final" philosophy, and if this reconciliation is now in fact *dissolving* then what is the truth status of his own system? How "final" is "final"? What are we to expect after "the end of days" in Protestant Germanic culture if in fact it *has* come? Does his *own* philosophy fall under the relativising dictum that "it is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age"? 179

This apparent methodological and existential "wobble" in the Hegelian architectonic system provides both friendly and unfriendly critics a veritable "field day" in attempts to justify or destroy it. What we want to do is just to try to understand its "warts" and all! To do this I suggest a "retail" rather than a "wholesale" approach. That is to say, one needs to sort out the issues one at a time so that one is careful to say no less and no more than Hegelian texts allow. We can best proceed from things relatively clear in his thought to things which are not quite so.

First of all, it seems quite clear Hegel believes that his own speculative philosophy has once and for all made clear, made explicit, the truth of the divine Idea, the truth of God as Absolute Spirit. This is the ontological truth of God known as *eternally* and *historically* self-diremptive and self-reconciling. God is the "beyond in our midst" who grounds and guides the whole of finite

existence behind all "appearances" to the contrary. This metaphysical conviction and vision is never in doubt, can *never* be in doubt, because its truth is one confirmed by the inner witness of the Spirit to those who *want* to see it. The Spirit, to use Calvin's analogy, gives us the divine "spectacles" by which the world is seen to *be* rational, to be purposively ordered.

Secondly, this truth, which is implicitly known to all in religious consciousness, has not been explicitly and systematically confirmed until the rise of "modern times and its religion."

Historically speaking, however, this explicit confirmation was *begun* in the Christ event, but it awaited maturation in the faith and life of Protestant Germanic Christendom. Hegel had a sense of *kairos* about the world-historical significance of Germanic-Western culture in its setting free a human spiritual potential never *before* achieved in history. History is "going somewhere" under the providential sovereignty of God. It aims progressively at the perfection of free rational spirituality in human existence. This is one of the things also inwardly guaranteed by the Spirit's witness to spirit.

Thirdly, it is modern philosophy, of which Hegel sees his own Idealistic form as the final consummation, which clearly understands the immanent relation between the self-creative life of the divine Spirit and the human spirit as progressively instantiated in the way various nation-states develop their *Sittlichkeit* toward the fulfillment of free rational subjectivity. Every philosophy in the history of philosophy has *aimed* at a true understanding of this divine-human relation, but historically speaking not every philosophy has been in the position of completely fulfilling that aim. The reason they have not been in such a position is that the self-revelation of God in man's inward religious consciousness and outward cultural history was not yet completed. The other way of putting this is that man did not yet fully or explicitly know himself to be what he truly or essentially is. "Know thyself" is the eternal desideratum of the philosophical enterprise, but such knowledge has not always been an *actual* possibility. Not until in the *Sitz im Leben* of man there actually appeared in a culture an "objectively" demonstrated reconciliation of the divine Spirit and the human spirit, of faith and reason, of religious life and secular life, could a final philosophy *claim* to be, and *know* itself to be, "final." Final philosophy awaited the rise of Protestant Christendom.

From one point of view, therefore, Hegel claims merely to do what all philosophers before him had attempted to do, i.e., to comprehend the spirit of their own time in the realm of thoughtman seeking to "know himself." His philosophy, too, cannot "transcend its contemporary world," and he as an individual cannot "overleap his own age." From another point of view, however, his philosophy is clearly understood by him as not just "another" philosophy eventually to be surpassed. This is because *his* time is a *privileged*

time. It is the *consummation* of a process of historical development in which the divine Idea has *now* fully revealed itself both in the religious and secular realms, i.e., in Germanic culture. One cannot correctly interpret the *goal* of a process until the process itself is fully realized. What therefore at first looks like the claim of an inflated ego operating out of an overwhelming personal *hubris* about his own philosophical self-importance, can also be seen as an expression of genuine humility. His philosophy is "final" because he was given the gift of living in a privileged time where God was now consummately disclosing a truth about himself and his relation to man which all of human history has longed for. Only those who have never known the thrill of believing deeply that in *their* time God was doing a "new thing" for the redemption of human sorrow and suffering, and that *they* could actively have a share in it by putting their own wills and wits at his disposalonly those will read Hegel's claims to philosophical "finality"

solely as expressions of a megalomaniac mind. If the conviction of a new perspective on truth produced no prophetic passion, the persistent human malaise would be without hope and consolation. Whatever one may think about Hegel's speculative view of the "final" world-historical significance and value of Protestant Germanic culture, one must not fail to realize that it was in part an expression of hope—the hope that a new possibility for alleviating human sorrow and suffering was dawning in history. Hope, phenomenologically speaking at least, is the human conviction that the new is *really* possible, and to this extent at least, Hegel's philosophy is a philosophy of hope—*hope in God and man and for history*.

Fourthly, whatever Hegel may have meant by the "end of days" having arrived in Protestant Christendom, one must keep in mind, as we pointed out in the last chapter, that *no state can exhaustively instantiate the Ideal State* as it exists "in the mind of God" if for no other reason than it is a *temporal* entity. It is finite and Hegel is quite clear about that, at least as I read him. Whatever is finite has the dialectically restless principle of "otherness" or *dis-unity* at work in it; and so if the "end of days" has come in the Protestant German state it *cannot* mean that the perfection it represents is lacking in the *continuing* temporal mediation of its always latent "otherness" as a finite state. A *naïve* "culture Protestantism" where the state is rationally and religiously unreproachable in its claim to be a "divine agent" would be, and as we saw *was*, something specifically repudiated by Hegel. Hegel would have no argument with Barth on this principle. Some of his statements are nonetheless unguarded in this connection, and that tends to add a dimension of unclarity to his position. A systematic analysis of *all*

his statements on this issue, however, can put these unguarded statements in proper perspective.

Fifthly, if the German Protestant state is to be understood as only a *temporal* and *finite* instantiation of the Ideal State, its religio-secular ethical consciousness is nonetheless understood by Hegel to have brought consummately to expression an *infinite* and *eternally* true principle the "Protestant principle" of free rational subjectivity which was developed as an explicit implication of Christian revelation given in the Christ event. This is the essential truth of what Hegel calls the "Idea" of Christianity as a historical religion. At least in the explicit *knowledge* of this *principle* achieved in that culture the "end of days" can be understood as "fully come." Hegel's position could then be understood as insisting that once this knowledge of the principle had arrived historically, it could not *ultimately* or *ever again* be fully *forgotten*. As with *all* those aspects of truth which have been preserved in developing human ethical

self-consciousness from antiquity to modernity, from empire to empire, and from nation to nation, just so *this* truth, once explicitly entered into humanity's collective historical cultural consciousness, will be preserved, cannot be forgotten. It *cannot* be forgotten, any more than we can "forget" Socrates or the principles of Hellenic culture. To be quite simplistic here, to try to *forget* Socrates and Hellenism one must necessarily *remember* what they were in order to forget them. Willfully to build a culture in conscious antagonism to the principles they believed in is to be forced necessarily to remember them. The same would apply to the principle of Germanic Protestantism. This is Hegel's position as argued in the *Phenomenology*. The self-consciousness of the human spirit in every *present* is essentially constituted and informed by the recapitulation of the whole history of the human spirit *past*.

Sixthly, the "discordant note" sounded in the LPR, seen in the context of the previous points discussed here, would seem best understood as a free and candid recognition on Hegel's part that the very culture which had finally at "the end of days" produced the clear knowledge of the principle of free rational subjectivity under divine providence, and had actually *begun* self-consciously to "build it into the real world," was itself on the wane. Fackenheim suggests this eventuality puts Hegel's whole philosophical enterprise and goal in doubt, and that were Hegel alive today to see what *did* happen in the Christian West in the last half-century "it may safely be said that . . . so realistic a philosopher as Hegel would not be a Hegelian." 180 That view seems to me to need some qualification.

Fackenheim is right in insisting that Hegel aimed at producing a

"realistic" philosophy which would neither offer a dogmatic *a priorism*, as it were, "shot from a pistol," nor one which would mystically "take flight" from the conundrums of a "godless world" to a "worldless god." Unless reason could be demonstrated as comprehensively encompassing *all* the fracturing alienations of actual life, an adequate speculative philosophy would not be possible. It would remain stuck in fractured finitude, not able to rise fully to the infinite if indeed it could rise *at all*. It would remain finite and fail in the crucial test of *comprehensiveness*. Systematic totality of explanation is the *sine qua non* of a true speculative philosophy for Hegel.

But it should be remembered here that because Hegel aimed to *be* realistic, he recognized both the fact of *contingency* (owing to the possibility of arbitrary self-will and perversity in human life) and the fact of *the continuing power of the negative* in the realm of the finite (because it is a manifestation of the "moment" of otherness in the divine ontologic). This would mean that a truly comprehensive philosophy must in-

deed *expect* a "process of decay" in every finite state eventually to manifest itself. The "justification" of God in history does not await the production of a *utopian* state, but it rests on the principle of rational faith that *in spite of* just such "decay" which occurs over and over again, *in spite of* the apparent non-consolatory facts of sin, sorrow and suffering which are *always* present, God is at work, reconciling the world unto himself. Truth for Hegel is never a matter of mere appearances, but of self-actualizing essence "in" and "beyond" them.

If, then, one looks at the "discordant note" of the LPR in this context, it is difficult to maintain that a dissolution of the principle of reconciliation which was acknowledged "realistically" by Hegel *already* to be in process in nineteenth century Germanic Protestant culture, would cause a fateful conundrum for the "comprehensive" claim of the Hegelian system. Nor would the fact that in *our* day the fragmentation of "inner and outer" life, of theology and philosophy, of faith and reason, of religious life and secular life *seems* fixed and immovable. *Per contra*, it is the nature of Hegel's comprehensive system to encompass just such expressions of contingency and the destructive power of the negative in history under *an ultimate* onto-teleological principle of divine providence.

If this is so, then one can understand how Hegel can assert *both* that "For us [i.e., those who have arrived at the "final" standpoint of speculative thought] philosophical knowledge has resolved this [apparent] discord," *and* that "this reconciliation itself is merely a partial one without outward universality." 181 He does not have to become *un-Hegelian* when faced with such apparent discord because the whole of the LPR project, as *presupposing* the

ontological truth of the divine Idea, "has just been to reconcile reason and religion, to show how we know this . . . to be in all its manifold forms necessary, and to rediscover in revealed religion the truth and the Idea."¹⁸² All *past* discords have been shown to be reconciled, and so any *present* discord can now be endured in hope for another, and even possibly *more* explicit, *future* reconciliation.

Those who have this hope in the eternal principle of reconciliation as ever at work in the discords of temporal history are, of course, modern speculative philosophers who now *understand, know* inwardly, that this *is* the case no matter how things at any given time "appear" to the contrary.

Philosophy is in *this* connection a secluded sanctuary and its servants constitute an isolated order of priests, who dare not mix with the world, and who have to protect the possessions of Truth. How the *temporal, empirical present* is to find its way out of its split, how it is *to be shaped*, has to be left

to it, and is not the immediate practical business and concern of philosophy. 183

Hegel's "flight" here is not from the past, which he is certain he has correctly understood as being a providential development of the principle of free rational subjectivity culminated in Germanic culture, nor from the firm conviction that the truth of the divine Idea as revealed in Christianity is what ultimately guarantees the validity of this understanding to the purpose of history. It is a flight from speculation about how the empirical, temporal present *and* future will manifest and vindicate faith in that truth, about *how* the *now* explicitly known truth that the rational *is* the purposively actual will or can come to further realization in God's ongoing providential dealings with man in history. All the philosopher can do is "protect" the truth now finally disclosed and wait and see how in fact temporal history comes to manifest it in the future.

One should not fail to note that on this reading of Hegel the future, the temporal-empirical future, remains radically *open* as far as the philosopher is concerned. It is open *both* to possible further *progress* in the scope of the realization of free rational subjectivity *and* to recurring *regress* in its expression. What is guaranteed is that *ultimately* the truth of that principle will prevail again and again, and even if only in varying degrees of fulfillment. This is implicit in the conviction of the essential unity of the divine and human natures, the principle of God's incarnational relation to human life and history as explicitly disclosed in the Christ event. It is *this* that provides a steady *inward* "repose" as we confront the conundrums of history. But because the divine reason is "cunning" and operates "behind our back," in any given temporal segment the

outward shape of things may appear utterly fractured and *humanly* unmendable. Man is not relieved of the finite temporal terror of existential anxiety and despair. Between the historical "moments" of ever new reconciling syntheses of the inner and outer life lie the historical "moments" of dark "otherness" where in terms of both knowing *and* doing we may exist, in Kierkegaardian terms, suspended over seventy thousand fathoms of uncertainty. But Hegel the philosopher is sure that once *again*, at some time, a new reconciliation can and will occur. And when *this* happens, a *new* philosophical "justification" on the order of the Hegelian ideal can be demonstrated. But not until then. The time is not always "ripe" for such a philosophical justification because not until a dialectical *culmination* of historical consciousness is reached *in fact* can philosophy correctly interpret it. But if it is interpreted *correctly* Hegel is sure that neither the religious "Protestant principle" nor the dialectical ontological principle of the Absolute known as Spirit will be

contradicted or surpassed as interpretive principles. These, for Hegel, are "final."

This interpretation of Hegel does *not* get us clear on the tension between his statements that his philosophy first needs a "completed," "cut and dried" world where the principle of reconciliation is already fully actual in order to exist *at all*, and statements which suggest the reconciliation in Germanic culture is only *partial* and this apparently only in *thought*, "without outward universality." There is a "wobble" here, but it seems to be a wobble between Hegel the proud German and Hegel the speculative philosopher. He did not doubt the final ontological truth of his own system, but he clearly had begun to doubt that his Germanic culture had the spirit and power to maximize fully the actualization of the principle of reconciliation which had there become known at "the end of days." He had even begun to doubt the continued existence of Christendom as a world-historical cultural institution. Yet, as I read him, he did not doubt that the *truth* which the Christian religion "represents" and Germanic philosophy "demonstrates" were "final" and eternal. This interpretation "saves" *most* of the textual facts, I think, and it makes it possible, in contrast to Fackenheim, to suggest that were he alive today he both could and would indeed continue to be a Hegelian. That is all I have intended to demonstrate. One does not have to go "outside" or "beyond" his system to do so. 184

With this we end our two-chapter analysis of how Hegel's christological conceptions about the universal significance of the Christ event are related to his general theory of religion. I have sought to show how they presuppose each other, but it has become

clear, I think, that it is only *after* the rise of the Christian religion, as originating in the historic Christ event, that an explicitly *adequate* interpretive philosophical schema for understanding both the history of religion and the history of the world has been attainable by a final speculative philosophy. Hegel's self-conscious attempt to remain specifically Christian and Lutheran in his christologically "orthodox" Idea of the Incarnation decisively structures his system as its "speculative central point." That I think has been adequately demonstrated and that is once again all I intended to demonstrate. I have tried to understand his system on its own terms in relation to these problems, not to defend it. I did, however, seek to defend him from what I felt were superficial or truncated *criticisms* which I deemed unfair in the light of a more carefully reading. My respect for the profundity of his philosophical and theological effort required at least that be done.

Chapter 4

Christology, Theology and Philosophy: A Methodological Inquiry

Religion comprises, first of all, representations [Vorstellungen] of God. These representations, as such are arranged in the creeds, are imparted to us from youth on as the doctrines [Lehren] of religion, and insofar as the individual has faith in these doctrines and finds in them the truth, he has what he needs as a Christian. But theology is the science [Wissenschaft] of this faith. If theology gives merely an external enumeration and compilation of religious doctrines, then it is still not science. . . . Genuine theology is thus essentially at the same time philosophy of religion and this it was likewise in the Middle Ages. 1

As soon as theology ceases to be a rehearsal of what is in the Bible, and goes beyond the words of the Bible . . . it employs forms of thought and passes into thought. If, however, it uses these forms in a haphazard way so as to show that it has presuppositions and pre-judgments, then its use of them is of an accidental, arbitrary kind, and it is the investigation of these thought-forms [Denkformen] which is solely [the task of] philosophy. 2

What is a theology without a knowledge of God? Precisely what a philosophy is without that knowledge, sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal! 3

Since this essay is undertaken out of a specifically theological interest and since we have achieved greater clarity about the systematic relationship between Hegel's general theory of religion and his christological convictions, we are now ready to pose a final question. The question is this: What did Hegel understand to be the

methodological relationship between his own speculative philosophical reenactment of the church's christological witness and the task of the theologian *vis-à-vis* that same witness? Or to put the question another way, what is it that Hegel

thinks both links *and* distinguishes the *wissenschaftliche* task of theology and that of philosophy?

To put the question in this way, of course, already implicitly assumes (1) that there is in fact both a necessary relationship and a legitimate distinction between the systematically reflective task of the theologian and that of the philosopher, and (2) that Hegel's own discussions about the speculative significance of the Christian religion and its christological witness not only presume this to be the case, but also reflect a methodologically clear enough articulation of his own understanding of the precise nature of this necessary relationship and legitimate distinction that there is some prospect for getting a reasonably definitive answer to our question. The first assumption, historically speaking at least, from the time of the church's second century "apologists," seems justifiable, and Hegel himself, in principle at least, clearly accepted it as the introductory quotations to this chapter already indicate. It is the second assumption about his methodological clarity which is more debatable. Thus, it might conceivably be argued that though it is true that *in principle* he claimed to recognize the traditional relationship-in-difference, *in fact* his attempts to articulate his interpretation of the principle as it related to his own system in the end tended, methodologically, either hopelessly to confuse the two tasks or quite rigidly to separate them. In the first case the relationship between the tasks would be preserved, but the distinction would be lost; in the second case the distinction would be preserved but the relationship lost; and in either case our second assumption would turn out to be unwarrantable.

As with other knotty issues in the interpretation of Hegel's thought,

this problem is not easily sorted out because from context to context Hegel is not always as clear and consistent in his use of terms as one might wish. If he were, the task of defending and clarifying the second assumption would be much easier. The fact is, however, that his manner of discussing this problem gets very complex and confusing. For example, we are told in one place, "Philosophy, which is theology, is solely concerned with showing the rationality of religion,"⁴ and we immediately find ourselves having to supply qualifications and further distinctions from other contexts to help make clear his intention in such a synoptic predication of equivalency. Thus again, as Clark reminded us about Hegel's complex use of the term *Vorstellung*, "The question [of] what Hegel meant by a term is seldom to be answered in the form of a definition."⁵

Accordingly, therefore, the answer to the question which is posed in this chapter, which in turn rests upon the validity of the second assumption given above, must work itself out within the larger context

of Hegel's whole mature corpus, and the answer, as well as the assumption with which the question begins, must in this way, and this way only, find their ultimate warrant.

How then shall we proceed? First of all, we will examine those texts where he specifically speaks about the task of theology *vis-à-vis* the religious consciousness and historical experience of the Christian community of faith. Secondly, we will examine those texts where he indicates how this task is related to the philosophical problem of an adequate onto-logic. Thirdly, in the light of our analysis of the first two points, we will indicate how we think Hegel's LPR can be understood, from a *theological* perspective, as a prolegomenon exercise in Christian "fundamental theology" which aims at justifying, as David Tracy once nicely phrased it, "a philosophy of religion based on the Christian fact."⁶ Our argument will be that though Hegel clearly did not consider himself to be a theologian vocationally, or to be "doing theology" in the traditional sense of intentionally presenting a complete dogmatic "system" for the Christian community of faith, he did consider his LPR philosophic reenactment of the *Begriff* of religion and of God implicit in the incarnational witness of this faith to provide a more adequate form of speculative *Begrifflichkeit* by which the church's theologians could proceed to that task in the modern era. It is this conviction about his speculative method *vis-à-vis* Christianity which has made Hegel's thought a matter of serious theological interest to me from the beginning, because the problem of adequate metaphysical conceptualities for Christian theological discourse, especially about God as related to the Christ event, remains in our own day a crucial one.⁷

Theology and the Christian Religion

To begin with, we must distinguish between the *form* of theological thought and its *content*. As a preliminary distinction we may say that for Hegel the form of theology is reflectively rational and its content (or object) is the religious consciousness i.e., the experience of a religious community's witness of faith as that witness involves predication, directly or indirectly, about the nature of God and his relation to the world. Thus, we can also say that the *goal* of theology is to grasp in a rationally conceptual manner the convictions about God which nurture and guide the religious life of a particular community of faith in the case at hand, the Christian community. But, in principle, any religious tradition can be so considered if the linguistic and reflective dimensions

of a culture in which it is found are sufficiently advanced as to promote and value such a consideration. *Christian* theology, then, as a preliminary definition, may be said to be the task of grasping in a *wissenschaftlichen* manner the convictions about the nature of God represented in the Christian community's witness of faith.

Hegel, for example, insists that "theology is the knowledge [Wissen] of religion,"⁸ or, more directly, "the comprehension [das Begreifen] of religious content."⁹ Thus, the goal of theology is to be "scientific" religion. Religion "in its highest and most developed form . . . is theology, scientific [wissenschaftliche] religion; it is this [religious] content known in a scientific way as the witness of Spirit."¹⁰ In terms of its *ultimate* cognitive reference or "objective" content, religion "is the knowledge of God" and "the explication of this knowledge, which is mediated, is the explication of religion itself."¹¹

If religion in its ultimate cognitive reference is concerned with a knowledge of God, and if it begins concretely with "the consciousness that there is something higher than the human"¹² and "the consciousness of what is in and for itself true,"¹³ then for Hegel theology may be said to be, and indeed is "supposed to be a knowledge of God and of that relationship of man to God which is determined by the nature of God,"¹⁴ a knowledge which the religious consciousness of any given religious tradition, including the Christian, logically implies. It is in this context, therefore, that Hegel informs us that "Christian dogmatic is the complex of doctrines whose presentation makes the Christian religion distinctive; it informs us of God's revelation, the knowledge of what God is."¹⁵ And if we have understood Hegel correctly, as was

argued earlier, *the* distinctive characteristic of the Christian religion is its incarnational and trinitarian witness as normatively disclosed through the church's "representations" of the historic Christ event.

Theology and Christian Vorstellungen

But if the *ultimate* cognitive reference of the religious consciousness for theology is God, the *proximate* reference is religious *Vorstellungen*. What does Hegel mean by such *Vorstellungen*? In one place he suggests that

Religion comprises, first of all, representations [Vorstellungen] of God. These representations, as they are arranged in the creeds are imparted to us from youth on as the doctrines of religion, and insofar as the individual has faith in the doctrines, he has what he needs as a Christian. But theology is the science [Wissenschaft] of this faith.¹⁶

Here the representations are said to be "doctrines" which are "arranged" in the "creeds." These doctrines are for Hegel propositional composites, syntheses of conceptual "reflection" and "positive" or historical data, and they are found in both the biblical witness and the official creeds of the church. Such "doctrines" are from the beginning implicit in the biblical text and are rendered more explicit, in terms of their conceptual form, in the reflective in this sense *theological* witness of the church through the centuries. Thus, he says, "The words of the Bible are a presentation [of doctrinal truth] which is not systematic; they are Christianity as it appeared in the beginning; it is Spirit which grasps the content, which unfolds its meaning."¹⁷ Yet, he insists, "rational knowledge is an essential element in the Christian religion itself"¹⁸ and so even though the doctrines of the Christian religion are given implicitly in the Bible "in a positive way," an "immediate way,"¹⁹ they nonetheless contain a rational, conceptual, "objective" content which is a revelation of the nature of God and his relation to the world. It is this "content" which becomes systematically "unfolded" and explicit under the witness of the Spirit in the developing history of the church's theological reflection.

What Hegel primarily has in mind with reference to such *biblical* doctrinal *Vorstellungen*, I think, are certain christological statements such as are found in the Gospel of John's "Prologue" (e.g., "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," and "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"), or in Paul's epistles (e.g., in the so-called "Kenotic Hymn" of Philippians 2:5-11, the statement in II Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," or the Galatians 4:4 assertion, "When the fullness of time was come God

sent forth his Son"). It would also include statements such as "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5) and the opening lines of Genesis, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

In Hegel's terms these are *Vorstellungen* in the sense discussed in Chapter 2. They are a form of thinking, peculiarly characteristic of the religious consciousness, which, while not to be conceived as identical with immediate sense impressions of finite reality, still are symbolic conceptual representations of God which are "mixed" with sense, hence "sense-bound" and a "way of thinking by means of relationships derived from nature."²⁰ They are conceptual representations of God narrated in stories of his "acts" in history or "before" history, and yet they are, in essence, *doctrinal* predication which are meant to be a revelation of God's essential nature and his continuing relation to the world.

These biblical doctrinal predication are also taken up into and "ar-

ranged" by the church's formal *creeds*. They are "arranged" more systematically as lifted from the text for further reflection, and yet they retain the *form* of *Vorstellung* mixture of sense and thought. Thus, the "Apostles Creed" says, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," etc. All the church's formal creeds, Hegel believes, share in this representational form of expression, even as they moved ever more explicitly to combine philosophical or speculative conceptualities with themthe peculiarly exemplary zenith of such a movement being the rise of scholastic theology in the Middle Ages. He believed that in this scholastic theology the "historical" was still not adequately subordinated to the speculative content, but he shared with these thinkers the conviction that

the Christian religion should be worked out for thought, and be taken up into thinking knowledge, and realized in this; and thus that it should attain to reconciliation [with speculative thought], having the divine Idea within itself, and that the riches of thought and culture belonging to the philosophic Idea should become united to the Christian principle [i.e., the revealed incarnational principle of reconciliation]. 21

In the light of these statements it is now possible to get a somewhat firmer grasp on some of the different ways in which Hegel uses the term theology and understands the theological task. First of all, in terms of the *form* that theology takes, it is conceptually interpretive. That is to say, it is concerned with rationally understanding the religious *meaning* of events in time and space, history and nature, *insofar* as they disclose the truth of the nature of God and his relation to the world. To this extent, the biblical texts

themselves are "theological." They already represent an interpretive move on the part of the early Christians to speak of the universal truth, the *weltanschauliche* truth, the speculative truth of the Christ event as disclosed in Jesus' life and teachings. In one sense one could say that for Hegel it is the *kerygmatic* witness of the text to Christ, as that witness involves not only an existential call to personal decision for faith, but also a cognitive "right understanding" of the proper faith relation between God and man, which already constitutes a "theological" act. This latter is the conceptual "content" of the *kerygmatic* witness in terms of which the modern theologian does his explicitly "scientific" reflection. One could say, therefore, that, along with modern redaction criticism, Hegel recognized the interpretive theological "overlays" which each Gospel writer employed in reworking the traditions of the "Jesus of history."

But Hegel never forgot that this hermeneutic conceptual task was intimately linked with the "witness of the Spirit" to the final truth and meaning, personal and corporate, of the *kerygmatic* faith borne by the Christian community. In short, he insisted that the subjective or existential dimension of faith is as important as the objective or conceptual dimension, and that in terms of the *ultimate* hermeneutic circle in which any theologian works, the *truth*, the final and universal conceptual truth, of the *kerygmatic* witness to Christ is "inwardly" certified in the faith experience by the Spirit. In a classic passage Hegel writes,

For I understand by faith neither the merely subjective state of belief which is restricted to the form of certainty, leaving untouched the nature of the content, if any, of the belief, nor on the other hand only the *credo*, the church's confession of faith which can be recited and learned by rote without communicating itself to man's innermost self, without being identified with the certainty which a man has of himself, with his consciousness of himself [as given by the Spirit]. I hold that faith, in the true, ancient sense of the word, is a unity of both these meanings, including the one no less than the other. 22

He goes on to say that "they are fortunate times" when the church's teaching "is not opposed by a creed of man's own making, nor has changed into something external, untouched by the Holy Spirit."23 The task of theology, then, from this perspective, is concerned with the conceptual content and systematic ordering of the biblical and creedal *Vorstellungen* of the Christian witness of faith as illumined by the witness of the Spirit. And that is why, in a passage we hurried over above, Hegel could say that the Christian religion is "in its highest and most developed form . . . theology, scientific religion; it is this [religious] content [in its biblical and creedal

forms] known in a scientific way *as* the witness of the Spirit."²⁴ Theology is a conceptually and systematically interpretative task whose "truth" as conceptually known is made possible and directed by the inward witness of the Spirit. In this way it is a form of thinking "which, though human, is also divine, which seeks not its own interest" (as is the case with a *merely* private and *willkürliches* interest), "but the universal," and it involves that spiritual knowing by the *Vernunft* in man (in contrast to a merely *sinnlich-verständige* mode of knowing and predication) "which knows and contemplates the infinite and eternal as that which alone has affirmative being."²⁵ Thus the "form" of theology as conceptually interpretive is also spiritually motivated by an interest for the "truth" about God and his relation to the world. It is a *human* task, but it has both a divine "object" and a divine "mission" as a "science." Its ultimate cognitive content is this divine

"object" as proximately disclosed in the *Vorstellungen* of the biblical and creedal witness of the Christian religion.

Theology and Its Hermeneutic Presuppositions

If we have shown that theology in the initial sense may be said to be understood by Hegel as a conceptually interpretive "scientific" discipline which seeks to articulate the rational, *geistige*, universal truth of the "content" of the Christian religion as present in its biblical and traditional doctrinal *Vorstellungen*, then to this more formal definition we must add the historical qualifier, "in any given era."²⁶ To append this qualifier is immediately to raise the thorny issue about the "presuppositions" of theology as a "scientific" discipline in any given era. This issue in turn will lead directly into the discussion of the way in which theology and philosophy are understood by Hegel to be similar and yet different in their concern for "universal truth." Furthermore, if it is assumed that the task of theology is always at once *both* a confessional *and* apologetic enterprise,²⁷ an assumption which I personally share, then one of our central concerns in this chapter will be to explore Hegel's view of the necessary apologetic function of Christian theology as a reflective task, especially as this relates to the task of philosophy as the science of "universal truth."

To understand why the historical qualifier to our initial definition is important for understanding Hegel's ideas on the task of theology, it will be helpful to note the basis of some of his trenchant criticisms of certain brands of "theology" which were being promoted in his own day. The designation which Hegel used for such inadequate theologies was the "theology of *Verstand*," or "Enlightenment theology."²⁸ In the long run it was a designation

clearly meant to convey the conviction that the then-current demise of an adequate theology was in his view directly traceable to uncritical acceptance of the presuppositions of Kant's "critical philosophy."²⁹ Hegel believed the twin methodological evils of "skepticism" and "subjectivism" implied by this philosophy had infected the theological task. "Subjectivism" he understood to be the consequence of "skepticism," and so it is skepticism which both from a philosophical and a theological point of view he considered to be the most serious consequence of Kant's philosophy.

This problem of "skepticism" obviously refers to Kant's argument that *theoretical* reason could not demonstrate either the existence or nature of God. This is because the *a priori* categorical "schema" of the understanding and the "regulative" Ideas of *Vernunft* which make possible "necessary" predication about the finite world of physical nature in sci-

ence are suitable *only* for predication about phenomenal reality, and not about noumenal reality or that which grounds the phenomenal, the Infinite. The problem of "subjectivism" refers to the practical and theological result of this assumption: religion is thereby reduced to a matter of "feelings" or to a purely subjective "intuition" *that* God is implying that we cannot truly know, speculatively speaking, *what* he is in his eternal nature. Thus, Hegel believes it is proper to say that "modern theology . . . treats more of religion than of God."³⁰ That is to say, "it is held that religion is something entirely subjective, and that man has really no knowledge of the nature of God,"³¹ no rationally "objective" knowledge which can be conceptually known, argued or defended in a publicly "scientific" manner.³²

This latter result is to be seen especially in the theologies of Jacobi and Schleiermacher,³³ and both, he believes, have fallen prey to an uncritical acceptance of Kant's metaphysical *Nichtwissen*. Thus, in the Preface to the Greater Logic, Hegel bemoans

the strange spectacle of a cultured people [Modern Germany] having no metaphysics as it were a temple, in all other respects richly ornamented, but lacking its Holy of Holies. Theology, which in earlier times had been the guardian of speculative mysteries, and of a metaphysic subordinate to itself, [has with the rise of Kant] given up this science in exchange for emotions, for popular practicality, and learned historicity.³⁴

Commenting on the kind of "unsatisfactory peace" which such modern theologies based on Kant's critical philosophy have promulgated on the question of the relation of faith and reason, he concludes that the peace owes itself to the fact that either "on the one hand, faith [has] lost all substantial meaning," with "only the

empty husk of subjective conviction remaining," or "on the other hand, reason [has] renounced all claim to a knowledge of the Truth, the human spirit being left with only appearances and feelings for its sustenance."³⁵ Faith has been reduced to arbitrary "subjectivism" because confidence in the power of speculative reason had been reduced to epistemological "skepticism," and so it follows

that the nature of the mischief done to religion and theology by the Enlightenment is that they no longer possess a truth that is *known*, an *objective content*, a *doctrinal* theology: although, strictly speaking, it is only religion of which this can be said, for where there is no such content there can be no theology. It is reduced to historical erudition augmented by the meagre exposition of some subjective feelings.³⁶

This modern Enlightenment mischief caused by Kant's metaphysical *Nichtwissen* implies, contrary to what Plato and Aristotle believed, that God is "envious" a frequently used perjorative reference in Hegel for such speculative skepticism, modern or ancient.

For what else would it be but *envy* if God denied to man a knowledge of God; in doing so he would also have denied to man all Truth, for God alone is the True; what else is true, yet may not seem to have a divine import, is true only in so far as it is grounded in God and is known as coming from him; all else in it is transient appearance. 37

He continues,

This [implicit] assertion that God is envious must, within the bounds of the Christian religion, all the more astonish since this religion is and claims to be nothing else but the *revelation* of what God is, and the Christian community is supposed to be none other than the community into which the spirit of God has been sent and in which that spirit leads the members into the *knowledge of God*. . . . And without this knowledge what would the Christian community be? What is a theology without a knowledge of God? Precisely what a philosophy is without that knowledge, sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal!38

Such are Hegel's criticisms of what we may call the rationally "skeptical" and "subjectively" romanticist brands of theology in his day. But there were other activities going on called "theology" which also bore the brunt of his criticism. There were those who treated theology as merely an "historical" discipline, what he speaks about in the quotations above as theologies of "historical erudition" and "learned historicity."

One form of this kind of theology is that which consists in an "external enumeration and compilation" of inherited biblical and creedal doctrines *"ab extra."*³⁹ Though he clearly includes in this brand theologies which see their task as merely telling Christians what doctrines they ought to believe since these doctrines have been declared "orthodox" by the church, apart from the necessary personal confirmation and illumination by the Spirit, his criticism aims deeper. It includes theologies which are merely historically confessional, without the apologetic consideration as to whether or not these doctrines are *true*, universally, necessarily and speculatively true. It is theology reduced to the purely descriptive task of showing what "others" before us in the Christian community have believed and how they arrived at such beliefs based on the contingent and relative "accidents" of history. It is what we might call theology reduced to a purely immanent description of the "history of doctrine," operating

with supposedly appropriate scholarly disinterest as to whether such doctrines are necessarily still true *for us* or true *in themselves* as a decisive revelation of God himself. Hegel is not questioning the legitimate *historical* concerns of such a discipline as related to the theological task. He is questioning the assumption that this is *all* Christian theology is or is supposed to be. In this view of the task of theology, he argues, Christian doctrines

are regarded in the light of convictions which belong to *others*, as matters of history, which do not go on in our own mind as such, and which do not concern the needs of our spirit. The real interest here is to find out how the matter stands so far as others are concerned, what part others have played, and centers in this accidental origin and appearance of doctrine. The question as to what is a man's own personal conviction only excites astonishment. The absolute manner of the origin of these doctrines out of the depth of Spirit, and thus the necessity, the truth, which they have for our spirits too, is shoved on one side by this historical treatment. . . . If the philosophical knowledge of religion is conceived of as something to be reached historically only, then we should have to regard the theologians who have brought it to this point as clerks in a mercantile house, who have only to keep an account of the wealth of strangers, who only act for others without obtaining any property for themselves. . . . Theology of this kind has no longer a place at all in the dominion of thought; it has no longer to do with infinite thought in and for itself, but only with it as a finite fact, as opinion, ordinary thought [Vorstellung], and so on . . . With the true content, with the knowledge of God, such theologians have no concern.

In a rhetorical flourish he adds,

Much is told us of the history of the painter of the picture and of the fate of the picture itself, what price it has at different times, into what

hands it came, but we are never permitted to see anything of the picture itself. 40

What Hegel is suggesting is that since in the light of Kant's critical philosophy we cannot know the reality of *God*, theology has tended to take academic shelter in the "history of doctrine" as the science of articulating what Christians have said they believed *about* God over the centuries, i.e., confessionally speaking. Theology is thereby reduced to a purely descriptive study of the history of the Christian religion. The *proximate* object or content of theology, the biblical and doctrinal *Vorstellungen* of the Christian religion *qua* historical, has been methodologically, agnostically disconnected from the question of the universal truth content of the *ultimate* content or object of such *Vorstellungen*, God. What Hegel wants to reject is the idea that a fully adequate,

"scientific" theology is *merely*, to borrow Schleiermacher's terms, "an account of the Christian religious affectations set forth in speech,"⁴¹ an in-house confessional description of Christian beliefs fideistically expressed, but speculatively disinterested or agnostic about the necessary, universal truth about God open to public philosophical discussion. This is a theology which has lost its speculative nerve, its conviction that man has been made rationally in the *imago dei*. It has lost its apologetic confidence that Christianity is *the* "revealed" and "absolute" religion, and the philosophical confidence that adequate speculative reasons can be given to justify this. Christianity for Hegel is *a* "positive" religion, one among many in the long history of mankind, to be sure; but through its other-wise quasi-positive, quasi-reflective, quasi-relative doctrinal *Vorstellungen* there nevertheless has become possible an explicit knowledge of God which transcends the historical relativities of its own temporal forms. And this, he argues, is what a genuinely adequate Christian theology is ultimately concerned to express "scientifically" and to argue faithfully.

But it must perform this duty in any given era on the basis of adequate "presuppositions." In the end, as we saw earlier, all so-called "historical study," including a "history of doctrine" which aims to be something more than mere chronicle, brings certain "presuppositions" with it. Hegel knew that in the endand in every era in which historical study is pursuedthere is no historical interpretation without philosophical presuppositions, whether they are consciously held or acknowledged, or not. And this fact brings us naturally to the second form of an "historical theology" in his day with which Hegel does battle, a naïve "exegetical" theology.

Perhaps nothing in Hegel's discussion of theology sounds so modern as his criticism of what we have come to know in our own day as a "theology of the Word," or in broader compass, "biblical theology."⁴² He no doubt took special pains to attack the presuppositional naïvete implicit in this brand of then-current theology because of his negative encounters with it at the Tübingen *Stift* in the courses he took with G. C. Storr, the dominant force in the "old" Tübingen school.⁴³ Otto Pfleiderer characterized Storr's theological method as "putting together a dogmatic system, in the fashion of a mosaic, from detached biblical texts, without caring for any other proof of his propositions, either by appealing to philosophy or to the religious consciousness."⁴⁴ It was a kind of "proof-texting" method where the biblical materials were assumed to be a divinely inspired revelation to be contextually "explained" by simply laying down side by side texts from either testament on any given theme

(e.g., creation, sin, justification, etc.), and then adding semantic, historical and logical interpretive "glosses." But, argues Hegel,

As soon as what is called explanation begins, as soon as an attempt is made by reasoning and exegesis to find out the meaning of what is in the Bible, then we pass into the region of inference, reflection, and thought, and then the question comes to be as to whether our thinking is correct or not, and as to *how* [italics his] we exercise this power of thought.

It is of no use to say that these particular thoughts or these principles are based on the Bible. As soon as they cease to be anything more than the mere words of the Bible, a definite form is given to what constitutes them, to their content; this content gets a logical form, or, to put it otherwise, certain presuppositions are formed in connection with this content, and we approach the explanation of the passages with these presuppositions which represent the permanent element so far as the explanation is concerned. We bring with us certain ideas which guide us in the explanation given. The explanation of the Bible exhibits the substance or content of the Bible *in the form or style of thought belonging to each particular age*. The explanation which was first given was wholly different from that given now. 45

He goes on to suggest that such presuppositions involve views to the effect that "man is naturally good, or that we cannot know God."⁴⁶ Aside from the interesting fact Hegel considers that these specific presuppositions distort the Bible," he asserts that it is a matter of great importance to determine "whether or not this [sort of] content, these ideas are true predication [Sätze]."⁴⁷ Thus, when we approach the interpretation of the Bible with such content predictions,

It is no longer the Bible which we have here, but the words as these have been conceived of within the spirit [Geist]. If the spirit gives

expression to them, then they have already a form derived from the spirit, the form of thought. It is necessary to examine this form which is thus given in the content of these words.

It further follows, then, that

As soon as theology ceases to be a rehearsal of what is in the Bible and goes beyond the words of the Bible, and concerns itself with the character of the feelings within the heart [about the *meaning* of the Bible], it employs forms of thought and passes into thought. If, however, it uses these forms in a haphazard way so as to show that it has presuppositions and pre-judgments, then its use of them is something of an accidental, arbitrary kind, and it is the investigation of these thought-forms [Denkformen] which is solely [the task of] philosophy.⁴⁸

The last sentence of this quotation brings us directly to the issue of the relation of theology and philosophy, but let us briefly review what has been learned so far in this present section. The *proximate* subject matter with which theology as a conceptually interpretive "scientific" discipline works is the biblical and traditional doctrinal *Vorstellungen* of the Christian witness of faith, but the *ultimate* subject matter is God, his nature and his relation to the world, as this is "represented" in these *Vorstellungen*. The theologian works with the inherited "arrangement" of these *Vorstellungen* from the standpoint of their implicit rational or speculative (vernünftigen) "meaning," as that can be distinguished from their merely "positive" or historical reference. He does this, moreover, from a dual motivation. First, he seeks to help the Christian community understand confessionally the decisive character and redemptive significance of its own revelation from God, originally given in the kerygmatically proclaimed historic Christ event and subsequently elaborated in its creedal and cultic tradition. Second, he seeks to explore the apologetic significance of this revelatory truth-claim as it purports to be the fulfillment of the *Begriff* of religion and of God which have been progressively disclosed in human history. Thus, what Hegel thinks concerns the theologian is not just the "meaning" of the Christ event as it is experienced by the Christian community, but also the "meaning" of this event as it lays public claim to having a universal, speculative significance as "revealed Truth." The Christian religion, he says, both "is and claims to be nothing else but the revelation of what God is." 49

Fundamental and Dogmatic Theology: A Proposal

But such a theological explanation of the confessional and

apologetic "meaning" of the Christian witness of faith is given "in the form or style of thought belonging to each particular age"⁵⁰ and so the theologian is obliged to pay close attention to those "forms of thought," the speculative "first principles" and "presuppositions," which inform his confessional and apologetic hermeneutic task. The validation and clarification of *which* "forms of thought," "first principles" and "presuppositions" are adequate or "true" is said to be the task of philosophy.

As we prepare to turn to explore this latter issue, it is now possible, I think, to suggest that on the basis of these conclusions Hegel's over-all conception of the task of theology may be said to include, at least implicitly, a distinction between "dogmatic" theology and "philosophical" or "fundamental" theology. Dogmatic theology is said by Hegel to be the systematic "complex of doctrines," i.e., in their biblical and creedal forms, "whose [systematic] presentation makes the Christian religion

distinctive" as the consummate "knowledge of what God is" and of his relation to the world.⁵¹ To put it in my own terms, "dogmatic theology" has for its special task what is now usually called the task of "systematic theology," i.e., the cognitive exposition of the doctrines of God, of Christ, of sin, of man, etc. It involves the cognitively interpretive task of "correlating" the past "horizon" or religious meaning implicit in the biblical world-view of religious conceptualities (and the creeds which represent it) with the "horizon" of human cultural self-understanding present in the conceptualities of one's own day, i.e., as these have religious import. And the motive behind such a "correlation" is both confessional and apologetic in character. It is at once a clarification *and* a defense of the Christian religion as the "true" religion in the context of those peculiarly religious needs and problems which both Christians and those outside of its community mutually experience "in any given era."

Philosophical or fundamental theology would refer to the prolegomenon task of determining both the public criteria of what constitutes a "true" theological statement and the proper or most adequate philosophical *Begrifflichkeit* by which such theological or religious truth claims may be expressed. In this latter conception of theology, its ultimate speculative validation is dependent on the choice of a "right philosophy," or, if you will, correct speculative hermeneutic "presuppositions." If, as Hegel has said, "Genuine theology is . . . essentially at the same time philosophy of religion,"⁵² then a truly adequate and "complete" Christian theology would be *the systematic confessional and apologetic articulation of a philosophy of religion based on the Christian fact.* It would require articulating a speculative "fundamental theology"

which provides appropriate philosophical hermeneutic presuppositions for understanding and critically assessing the distinctively religious meaning both of the biblical-creedal *Vorstellungen* and of the cultural experience and knowledge of one's own day. It also would seek to demonstrate in the full range of its subsequent "dogmatic" content the personal and corporate redemptive meaning and possibilities of the Christian witness of faith as these hermeneutic presuppositions enable us to appropriate the "truth" of its originating and cumulative *past* into this *present*.⁵³

I believe this distinction between "fundamental" and "dogmatic" theology makes it possible to understand why Hegel sometimes *seems* to suggest that theology is solely restricted to the form of mere "picture-thinking," i.e., a thinking about God structured by the naïve "temporal" language about creation in Genesis 1:12, or by the equally naïve "temporal" language about God as Trinity, where the doctrine of creation is "divided" between "acts" of the Father, Son and Spirit.⁵⁴ But the na-

ture of the "dogmatic" function of theology is precisely the task of *interpreting* these inherited *Vorstellungen*, and so it must, obviously, *include* such modes of talk in pursuing its "correlating" function with present knowledge. It begins with them, but does not end with them. To end with them *would* reduce theology to mere "picture-thinking," as he rightly perceives. It seeks, therefore, in addition, to penetrate these *Vorstellungen* by thought and to show the cognitive link *between* these *Vorstellungen* and their universal, speculative religious meaning as such may be pertinent to the religious needs and interests of any given era. But the criteria for such correlative dogmatic re-interpretation must be developed "before" one proceeds *to* these *Vorstellungen*, and that involves the task of a "fundamental" theology where such criteria are set forth and defended. Thus theology must *also* pay attention to the "forms of thought" by which the *Vorstellungen* of the Christian witness are to be interpreted and expressed.

If this line of interpretation is correct, then the following two quotations, otherwise somewhat confusing in their reference to the nature of theology, point, in the first case, to the "fundamental," and in the second case, to the "dogmatic" aspects of the theological task within its explicit christological reference.

If we recollect how intricate is the knowledge of the divine Mind [Geist] for those who are not content with the homely pictures of faith [Vorstellungen] but proceed to thoughtat first only "rationalizing" reflection, but afterwards, as [it is] duty bound, to speculative comprehension, it may almost create surprise that so many, *and especially theologians, whose vocation it is to deal with these Ideas [Vorstellungen], have tried to get off their task by gladly accepting anything offered them for this behoof.* And nothing serves better to

shirk it than to adopt the conclusion that man knows nothing of God. To know what God as Spirit is to apprehend this accurately and distinctly in thoughts requires careful and thorough speculation. 55

Thought implies a new relation towards faith; that is to say, the aspect of Form enters into relation with the substantial element of truth. In the Christian religion this principle is present from the beginning. Regarded in one aspect, that religion starts, it is true, from an external history which is made a matter of faith; but this history at the same time professes to be the explication of the nature of God. . . . *The explication of the history of Christ, the unfolding of its meaning, is thus the deeper lying element. This has been given in thought, and it has produced Dogmaticsthe doctrine of the Church.* 56

It would seem from these quotations that the second task is assumed to presuppose the first and that the two tasks, taken together, constitute

the broadest conception of the total theological enterprise in Hegel's mind. In any given context, then, one or both of these aspects may be what Hegel means in the use of the term "theology," and his trenchant criticisms of the forms of theology in his own day frequently relate more to failures with respect to the first task, as this methodologically scuttles the possibility of successfully developing the second.

Theology and Philosophy

But now, how is this line of interpretation to be squared with Hegel's statement that since much "modern" theology in his day employed haphazard or inappropriate "forms of thought" in its conceptually interpretive task, it is to philosophy that an adequate theology must look for guidance and correction in meeting the deficiency? The "investigation of these thought-forms," Hegel averred in the passage quoted above, is "solely" the task of philosophy. "Solely" in what sense? Is the primary task of philosophy to be only a conceptual clearing house for speculatively interpretive presuppositions used by the theologian, only a thinking about the *form* of thinking, the *Begrifflichkeit*, which theologians employ and for that matter, which scientists, historians and other academic practitioners also employ? And if it is philosophy which specializes in such validation and clarification of a speculative *Begrifflichkeit*, then how is this different from or similar to the task of "fundamental" theology as I have presented it? The following quotation, at first glance, seems to compound the problem and to add to the confusion.

Theology is throughout only what philosophy is, for philosophy is just thinking about theology. It does not help theology to struggle

against philosophy, to say that philosophic theorems [Philosopheme] are to be set aside. Theology always has to do with the thoughts [Gedanken] which it brings with it, and these, its household and private metaphysics, are thus frequently an entirely uneducated, uncritical thinking which is to be found in the streets. These general conceptions, to be sure, are linked with specific subjective conviction, and this latter is said to prove the Christian content as really correct [als eigentümlich richtig]. But these thoughts which constitute the distinguishing criterion are only the reflections and opinions which float around on the surface of the time. Thus, when thinking steps forth for itself we separate ourselves from theology. 57

Yet, if one brackets momentarily the predication of equivalency between theology and philosophy given in the first sentence, it seems

fairly clear Hegel means that "we" who recognize the importance of philosophical hermeneutic presuppositions "separate ourselves" from *this type* of theology, i.e., one operating uncritically with such inadequate presuppositions. Then, if we pursue the distinction in the theological tasks we argued for above, this inadequate type of theology is a dogmatic theology which has failed to pursue in a critical fashion the "fundamental" aspect of the task in the production of its dogmatic system. This is a theology pursued by those referred to above who "have tried to get off their ("fundamental") task by gladly accepting anything offered them" in this respect for the dogmatic interpretation of Christian *Vorstellungen*. Thus what at first glance seems to be a confusing combination of a predicated identity of theology and philosophy, on the one hand, and a strong assertion of their disjunction, on the other, begins to be more interpretively manageable.

But we need to pursue further the implications of the first sentence, "Theology is throughout only what philosophy is, for philosophy is just thinking about theology," i.e., about the *Gedanken* and *Begrifflichkeit* a truly adequate theology presupposes and requires. Is philosophy "solely" concerned with the *forms* of thinking which theologians employ? No, in Hegel's thought the relationship is clearly deeper. It also deals with the same *content*, that to which the forms of *Gedanken* and the *Begrifflichkeit* referGod! Like theology, philosophy deals with the *proximate* content of religion and religious consciousness as that content *ultimately* discloses the nature of God and his relation to the world. "The object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity, God and nothing but God, and the explication of God." 58 On this basis Hegel can say,

Thus religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is itself, in fact, worship; it is religion, for in the same way it renounces subjective notions and opinions in order to occupy itself with God. Philosophy is thus identical with religion, but the distinction is that it is so in a peculiar manner, distinct from the manner of looking at things which is commonly called religion as such. What they have in common is, that they are religion; what distinguishes them from each other is merely the kind and manner of religion we find in each. It is in the peculiar way in which they both occupy themselves with God that the distinction comes out.⁵⁹

By "religion as such" Hegel means the "popular" form by which most "lay" Christians express their faith in God in the mode of traditional biblical and creedal doctrinal *Vorstellungen*, and he notes this is not the "form" or manner in which philosophy is occupied with the same "content." Thus, he asserts there are "two languages" by which man ad-

dresses himself to the truth about God as the Infinite Ground and ultimate reality which is the ontological "First Cause" of the finite world and man as a finite creature. There is "the one of feeling, of *Vorstellung*, and of the limited intellect which makes its home in finite categories and inadequate abstractions," and the other of "the language of the concrete *Begriff*." "Religion," he says,

is the kind and mode of consciousness in which the truth appeals to all men, to every degree of education; but the scientific attainment of truth [in philosophy] is a special kind of this consciousness, involving a labor which not all but only a few undertake. . . . Religion can exist without philosophy, but not philosophy without religion which it rather includes. 60

Here we hear again the assertion, as discussed in the earlier chapters, that philosophy as a cognitive discipline takes its speculative "rise" from the *Sitz im Leben* of man's religious consciousness and experience, and "transforms" its quasi-positive, quasi-reflective *Vorstellungen* into the speculative *Begriff*. But, to keep to the point of our interest here, how is *this* process ultimately different from theology as the "science" of religion, which Hegel also says in one place "is religion together with thinking, conceptualizing consciousness."61 The problem deepens.

My own understanding of this problem will attempt to resolve the issue by suggesting that *insofar* as the vocational theologian occupies himself with the prolegomenon issues of the "fundamental" task of theology, he does nothing different, conceptually speaking, than does the philosopher. If this is so, then as a "fundamental" theologian he may either gratefully "adopt" the results of a contemporary philosopher's "system" as having

produced a "right philosophy"⁶² which has publicly demonstrated the most adequate hermeneutic presuppositions for interpreting in a dogmatic system the present and past meaning of Christian *Vorstellungen*, or he may, in the absence of such a "right philosophy," assay to perform this task himself. In this latter case, he remains vocationally a theologian, but has temporarily donned the cap of philosophical reflection in order to articulate and defend the fundamental interpretive principles of an adequate philosophy of religion, i.e., an adequate understanding of the *Begriff* of religion and of God as disclosed in the history of human religious consciousness and experience. To *this* extent he also becomes a "philosopher" who enters the public arena where the universal truth of such principles must be argued and defended.

Contrariwise, *insofar* as the theologian is either indifferent to or disdainful of such a philosophic task in "fundamental" theology, and proceeds haphazardly or uncritically to produce a contemporary dogmatic

system based on inadequate philosophical conceptualities about God's nature and his relation to the world, his enterprise fails in the dignity of being a "true" expression not only of the past and present "universal" meaning of the Christian witness of faith, but also of those fundamental philosophic presuppositions which alone can publicly warrant the apologetic assertion that Christianity is the "final" and "revealed" religion where God is now fully "known." And it is at this point that an inadequate theology is subject to the correction of the philosopher, whose task it is to deal with the "science" of *universal* truth which, for Hegel, "includes" the truth of the religious consciousness as that is finally consummated in the Christian religion. From this point of view then, the philosopher is *not* a theologian, i.e., from the perspective of his cultural vocation, though he has the necessary public right and duty of "correcting," "investigating," or "criticizing" the *Gedanken* and *Begrifflichkeit* which such an inadequate theology arbitrarily or indifferently presupposes in its dogmatic task.

In order to shore up this interpretation, let us proceed to inquire just how Hegel uses the term "philosophy." As is true in the case of the various ways Hegel uses the term "theology," no simple "definition" is adequate, but the guiding principle of our synoptic interest from context to context will be a concern to specify more clearly in just what sense his view of the "scientific" tasks of theology and philosophy coincide and yet are different. In a preliminary fashion, of course, we have already suggested that they coincide in conceptual "form" and in the ultimate "object" or "content" of interest, namely the reality of God as revealed in universal religious consciousness and in the *Vorstellungen* of the Christian witness of faith as the most adequate articulation of that

consciousness in history. Yet, more specificity is needed if this line of interpretation is to be made secure, and we need this interpretive security in order adequately to round out the christological implications of his views about the relation of a "right" theology and a "right" philosophy.

The Goal of Philosophy and the Theological Task

First of all, it will be helpful to distinguish between the overall *goal*, the *form*, the *content* and the *scope* of philosophy as Hegel addresses these distinctions in various contexts. As to the ultimate goal or aim to which philosophy aspires, Hegel says that "the highest and final aim of philosophic science [is] to bring about . . . a reconciliation of the self-conscious reason [which emerges "within the precincts of the mental life"] with the reason which *is* in the world." 63 The "test" of such a philosophical system of interpretation is that it necessarily "be in har-

mony with actuality and experience," for, Hegel claims, the fundamental presupposition of all "true" philosophers, ancient and modern, is that "what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational." 64 Thus, "the business of philosophy is only to bring into explicit consciousness what the world in all ages has believed about thought," i.e., "that everything we know both of outward and inward nature, in one word, the objective world, is in its own self the same as it is in thought, and that to think is to bring out the truth of our object, be it what it may."65 It operates on "the firm belief that thought coincides with thing."66 Philosophy, then, is the conceptually interpretive discipline which seeks to demonstrate and produce *in and for the realm of thought* the reconciliation of thought and being which is *already actual in the world*. When it successfully does so, it has arrived at the truth of what *is*, the actual [Wirkliche] as distinguished from the merely apparent. And it is the aim of Hegel's own philosophy to do just this.

We have already noted in our earlier chapters how this philosophical confidence in the unity of thought and being, and in our ability to know it, is related to the doctrinal and cultic religious consciousness. There we saw that

Just as religion and religious worship [i.e., in *Andacht* and *Cultus*] consist in overcoming the antithesis of subjectivity and objectivity, so [empirical] science too and philosophy have no other task than to overcome this antithesis by the medium of thought.67

Hence, the incarnational principle of reconciliation represented in the "absolutely adequate" *Vorstellungen* of the Christian religion is at the same time the central speculative presupposition, the "speculative middlepoint" of his own philosophy of the Absolute as

Spirit. The epistemological confidence in the unity of thought and being, implicit in the two forms of religious representation and rendered explicit in the form of the philosophical *Begriff*, is thus based on the shared ontological assumption that God has "reconciled the world unto himself" and is continually doing so. "Reconciliation," Hegel says, means that the cognitive "opposition" in our initial reflective awareness, where we experience existentially the alienated sense of the difference between the finite and the infinite, and between our thought about a thing and the thing-in-itself, "springs up eternally." This is one moment of both the religious and philosophical consciousness. Yet "at the same time" this opposition "eternally abolishes itself" and so there is also "eternal reconciliation."⁶⁸ Just as thought philosophically "overreaches" this initial opposition of the sense of antithesis between thought and being, and hence "recon-

ciles" them, just so ontologically "God posits or lays down the Other, and takes it up again into his eternal movement." 69 This is then in essence the incarnational principle of reconciliation revealed in Christianity, and it represents the "truth of what *is*," which is the goal of philosophy.

At this point it becomes clear that a "true" dogmatic Christian theology in its christological interpretation will also necessarily "presuppose" this speculative epistemological and ontological perspective. To *this* extent, then, in terms of the assumptions which undergird the *goal* of the philosophic task, "theology is throughout only what philosophy is." That is to say, an adequate dogmatic theology must *also* presuppose the speculative incarnational principle of reconciliation in order to interpret the universal revelatory "meaning" of the church's christological *Vorstellungen*, and this dogmatic theological hermeneutic can operate effectively only *if* it has speculatively adequate *Gedanken* and a speculatively adequate *Begrifflichkeit* by which to "correlate" the past meaning of these *Vorstellungen* with the religious needs and problems of a given culture in any given era. Because Hegel believed his own philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit provided such *Gedanken* and *Begrifflichkeit*, he clearly also believed any truly adequate Christian theology in his day both could and should "adopt" such speculative presuppositions and concepts to get on with its dogmatic task. And it is precisely because of this that he considered his own philosophy, both from the standpoint of the necessary problems of fundamental theology as they condition the task of dogmatic theology, and from the standpoint of the philosophical and mythological "disclosure value" of the Christ event, to be

"orthodox *par excellence*." This event normatively discloses the nature of God and his relation to the world.

The Form of Philosophy and the Theological Task

As to its form, philosophy as Hegel conceives it involves both the *process* of conceptual thinking itself and the *Begrifflichkeit* by which such a process expresses itself in speculative predication. The process of its thinking is "dialectical" and reflects within itself thereby the "movement" of reality, what *is*. "Consequently . . . to comprehend an object is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations."⁷⁰ Thus, the process of human thought, which begins with the given or immediate unity of pre-reflective consciousness in unthematized experience, and which then proceeds by the negative necessity of its own self-conscious reflection to distinguish itself *from* and then *within* that unity, only "mirrors"⁷¹ the same dialectical move-

ment of reality itself.⁷² It was Hegel's purpose to "demonstrate" this truth experientially "from below," in the *Phenomenology*, and logically "from above" in the *Greater Logic*; and it was his specific purpose in the *Encyclopaedia* to "apply" it in the philosophy of Nature and Spirit.⁷³

Likewise, as we have seen, philosophy as concerned with the form of thinking also addresses itself to the problem of a speculative *Begrifflichkeit*, of an appropriate conceptual apparatus. It has to do with the analysis of propositions about "reality" and the development of a language of *begrifflicher* categories appropriate for predication about this "reality." Thus, he says, "Philosophy is the science in which every [assumed] proposition must first be scrutinized and its meaning and oppositions be ascertained."⁷⁴ In this concern "philosophy may be said to do nothing but transform [Vorstellung] into [Gedanken]," and ultimately into the *Begriff*, the pure concepts of a dialectical "onto-logic."⁷⁵ This entire formal process of philosophical articulation is, Hegel candidly remarks, the attempt to make "naive consciousness . . . walk on its head!"⁷⁶

Now if it is the task of philosophy to transform *Vorstellung* into *Gedanken*, and thence into the onto-logic of the *Begriff*, then to the extent it undertakes to develop appropriate conceptualities for talking about what is ultimately "real," it provides speculative conceptualities for talking about God, for God is the "first principle" of Being on which everything finite depends for its being.⁷⁷ And since, perforce, theology by definition is ultimately discourse about God, the Christian theologian needs adequate speculative conceptualities in order to get at this deeper speculative "meaning" of his inherited christological doctrinal *Vorstellungen*.

and to reinterpret their confessional and apologetic significance in any given era. To *this* extent, again, the dogmatic theologian, insofar as he assays to make objective truth claims about the universal significance of the Christ event and its "final" revelation of *God*, must come to his task with hermeneutic conceptualities which are publicly warrantable, philosophically speaking. And according to the line of interpretation being followed here, he must either "adopt" these from a "right" philosophy or in the absence of such, provide them and argue for them himself in an extensive fundamental theology. This makes it possible to understand, again, why Hegel can say "philosophy is throughout," i.e., in its metaphysical concerns, "only what theology is." And that is why when the theologian engages in this sort of speculative re-interpretation of the *Vorstellungen* of "ordinary" Christian consciousness, it appears to such a "naïve" consciousness to become "abstract" and "walk on its head," too!

But the task of the theologian is not simply to *repeat* these *Vorstellungen*, but to *interpret* their "meaning," their speculative implication, which acknowledged or not, is implicitly already there ready-to-hand. What the theologian does is to make that meaning explicit to and for cognitive reflection by a dialectical process of hermeneutic transformation.⁷⁸ To do that he needs another set of philosophically warrantable conceptualities. With their help the historically conditioned content of these *Vorstellungen* is changed into a content of "another kind," a speculatively conceptual knowledge of God and his relation to the world.⁷⁹ That is why, from a christological point of view, as we saw earlier, Hegel can assert that "the history of Christ" is "the explication of the nature of God"⁸⁰ and "the unfolding of the divine nature itself."⁸¹

The Content of Philosophy and the Theological Task

When Hegel discusses philosophy in terms of its content he cryptically suggests, as we noted earlier, that its content, or "object" is "God" and "the explication of God." What Hegel means by this is that the ultimate speculative content of philosophy involves both the explication of God as he is in-and-for-himself, i.e., his intrinsic nature as the Infinite Subject who is Spirit, and also the explication of his relationship to the world of finite nature and man as their Ultimate Ground, i.e., as that final reality which establishes the conditions for their own being and meaning.

In the first case, Hegel believed that pure logic, or better, onto-logic, understood as the conceptual "mirror" of the dialectic of reality itself, is "the truth as it is, without husk, in and for itself" and it "shows forth God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit."⁸² "I combine logic and

metaphysics," he says,⁸³ and so "a metaphysical definition of God is the expression of his nature in thoughts as such."⁸⁴ Thus, we may say that God is the ontological or metaphysical ground of the "essential" nature of things which Hegel speaks about by temporal analogy as God "before" the creation of the world. This means, speculatively speaking, that to know in a conceptually adequate manner the permanent, but ceaselessly dialectical structures or "essences" of the world in its actuality, its *Wirklichkeit*, is also to know God as onto-logic knows him as the infinite or ultimate condition of all possibilities actualized in it. Hence, "God, the absolutely infinite, is not something outside and beside whom there are other essences. All else outside God, if separated from him, possesses no essentiality. . . . The true knowledge of God begins when we know that things, as they immediately are, have no truth."⁸⁵ *This* is the truth which occupies the concerns of a speculative onto-logic.

For Hegel, then, the dialectical essentiality and actuality of the world, in contrast to its mere "appearances" as known by *Verstand*, analogically and objectively "mirrors" 86 the dialectical reality of God himself as a living "Subject" who is "Spirit,"⁸⁷ and this is the truth which *Vernunft* knows in the form of the *Begriff* of God which at once dialectically lies "beyond" and yet is immanently instantiated "in" these appearances.

Thus, to pursue the second sense in which Hegel intends us to understand God as the content of philosophy, God is not only transcendentally present and available to thought in his *thatness* and *whatness* by means of a conceptually "mirroring" onto-logic, he is also immanently related to the essential *being* of the finite world and its structures. The very *possibility* of an onto-logic for Hegel is predicated on the assumption that God is "manifest" in finite nature and finite spirit themselves, and, more than that, he is immanently related *ontologically* to the essentialities which make them what they *are*. God *is* Being and *gives* being to all else. Only if this immanent ontological relation obtains can man, and philosophy, "rise" to the infinite in thought. The way ordinary human consciousness understands the world, as we have seen, takes the form of a *sinnlich-verständigen* mode of consciousness by means of *Vorstellungen* predicated representations of reality which are a synthesis of a *posteriori* and *a priori* elements. This is what Hegel also calls the "rationalizing reflection" characteristic of mere *Verstand*. But thinking in the mode of *Vernunft* proceeds beyond this "quasi-rational" mode to the pure *a priori* form of knowing by means of the speculative dialectical onto-logic of the *Begriff*.

The point which needs to be made is that onto-logic does not *abandon* the finite world of ordinary experience which *Verstand* first organizes for thought; it *begins* there, but rises *above* it and such a way of thinking about it for the purpose of speaking of the reality of the infinite disclosed *in* it. It "remodels" or "expands" the conceptual *a priori* categories of *Verstand* to do this.⁸⁸ It sublates (aufheben) them, which means in the dialectic of onto-logic, it negates and preserves them at one and the same time. Speculative thinking about the infinite, therefore, presupposes not only that the world has a reality of its own as "other" than God, but that in this ontological "moment" of its otherness from God, God is still dialectically present as its essential ground, and in this sense preserves it as an "other" which is not totally other. The finite world of appearance, *qua immediately* known, is not adequate to reveal the full truth of its infinite ground. It needs the initial *mediation* of reflection in the mode of *Vernunft* in order to become *for consciousness* a revelation of God in the systematic form of an onto-logic. Yet in its immediacy the finite world is *implicitly* adequate as a vehicle for the revelation of God, for in its essentiality it is rooted in the causal primacy of the divine

Logos. If that were not so, then the human speculative rise, the activity of the human "nous" which penetrates through to the divine "nous," could never "get off the ground" and arrive at its own infinite ground, which is also the ground of the finite world as "other" from God in its appearances. In Hegel's own words,

... thinking is not something immediate. It begins from data [Gegebenen], but raises itself [erhebt sich] above the sensible manifoldness of what is given, negates the form of individuality, forgets the sensuous occurrence [i.e., as an *isolated* occurrence] and produces the universal, the true. This is not an immediate action, but the work of mediation, the going forth out of finitude. 89

Our point is that the epistemological confidence in the possibility of a speculative onto-logic and a knowledge of God as he is in himself, is rooted in the ontological assumption of the immanence of God as dialectically present-in-absence in the finite world. Hegel wants to insist that "God is the subsistence of all things" [das Bestehen aller Dinge] and is "actually in all things [in den Dingen wirklich]." He is even willing to be called a pantheist *if* that means the world is *Allgötterei*, divine in its Allness in terms of its unifying ground or depth, but not *Allesgötterei*, divine as a simple totality of *things*.⁹⁰

From a theological and christological point of view this is obviously a strongly *incarnational* view of God's relation to the world. The almost endless debates as to whether Hegel's view of God is compatible with Christian theism (which requires a distinction between God's "transcendence" in himself apart from the world and his "immanence" in it as the ultimate ground of its essential potentialities and its concrete actuality), or whether it is

just a philosophically speculative form of an ultimately immanentist naturalistic humanism,⁹¹ will probably continue unabated. It is not our purpose in this essay or in this immediate context to try to resolve this debate, though I am personally convinced Hegel's conception of the Absolute as Spirit is compatible with and an adequate expression of both a theistic and a Christian interpretation of the world. Anselm Min, while intentionally bracketing out the question as to whether Hegel's view of God may be said to be Christian, has nevertheless excellently analyzed the issue of the relation of God's "transcendence" and "immanence" in Hegel's system, and has so convincingly argued against the exhaustively "immanentist" interpretations of many modern Hegel interpreters, that his conclusions offer at least *prima facie* evidence for this conviction. "What Hegel tried to do through his 'speculative' approach" to this problem, Min says,

was to provide the ontological foundation for the very possibility of *both* transcendence and immanence and thereby also to sublate and transcend the rigid opposition often posited between them. This he did, I believe, not by denying either the finitude of the finite or the infinity of the infinite but, rather, by probing into the very conditions under which alone, in his view, the finite could be truly finite and the infinite truly infinite. This condition is the primordial, internal unity of infinite and finite in the true (wahrhafte) infinity and true transcendence of the Absolute Spirit which is itself and yet posits and "overreaches" its Other out of love. 92

Our concern here, however, is merely to note that if the content of philosophy is concerned with the nature of God in the form of an appropriate onto-logic as mirrored in the actuality of the world, together with a speculative "primordial" understanding of the nature of the *relation* between the two in terms of his "transcendence" and "immanence" (God in his being-in-himself-for-the-world), then any Christian dogmatic theology which proposes to discuss the distinctly religious "meaning" of doctrines such as the trinity, creation, providence, eschatology and redemption not to mention the incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ, must do so with the aid of ontological presuppositions which are philosophically warrantable.⁹³ They must be warrantable both in terms of the way such hermeneutic presuppositions "illumine" or "disclose" the essential cognitive "meaning" of man's universal religious experience of God and the way in which that implicit experience is explicitly clarified, normed and redemptively fulfilled by the witness about God as disclosed in the speculative and revelatory "meaning" of the Christ event. It is in the systematic hermeneutic correlation of these two "meanings" that dogmatic theology finds its confessional and apologetic task in any given era.

And for this task it must perforce either adopt from a "right philosophy," or provide for itself, a fundamental theology which articulates the phenomenological and ontological criteria for assuming such a correlation is possible and "true." This correlation requires in advance, as Hegel says, "careful and thorough speculation" about the truth of the essential nature of God and his relation to the world, and about the way, therefore, this truth is concretely particularized, incarnate, in the Christ event. That is also why, in terms of its *ultimate content*, "theology" read, an adequate and true theology "is only throughout what philosophy is," an attempt to articulate a true knowledge of God. And thus from the perspective of its *speculative* interest, such a theology as a philosophy of religion based on the Christian fact rests on the "speculative middlepoint" of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Both a "right theology" and a "right philosophy" *begin* with the intuitive conviction that the *Vorstellungen* representing *this* event in history have a final and

consummate "disclosure significance" in relation to the question of God's essential nature and his relation to the world.

The Scope of Philosophy and the Theological Task

Turning now to the issue of the *scope* of philosophy, Hegel says that philosophical knowledge, like religion, has to do with a "general theory of the universe" [Weltanschauung].⁹⁴ If we are to take the outline of the *Encyclopaedia* seriously, then that outline is a specification of the scope of philosophy: a "circle of circles" which includes logic, philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit.⁹⁵ But it is important to note that by Hegel's own specification philosophy may be more centrally understood, methodologically speaking, as focusing on pure logic, or ontologic, which when adequately worked out, makes possible the development of an "applied logic," i.e., a philosophy *of* nature and a philosophy *of* finite spirit. If logic, he says, is "the system of the pure types of thought," then, he adds, "we find that the other philosophical sciences, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Mind [Geist], take the place, as it were, of an Applied Logic, and that Logic is the soul which animates them both."⁹⁶

Now onto-logic is concerned with the nature of God, as it were, *in himself* "before" the creation of the world. If "applied" logic is the attempt to demonstrate how "pure" onto-logic is mirrored in and "animates" the other disciplines, then Hegel is implying that the other aspects of the discipline have their significance as confirmations of, expressions of the truth of onto-logic, i.e., *insofar as* they are vehicles for a manifestation of God. They become vehicles for disclosing the relation of God to the world of nature

and of finite spirit God existing, as it were, *for himself*, as a revelation *of himself*. Thus "pure" logic, without the "realistic" mediation and confirmation of its truth in nature and the emergence of finite spirit, is only a "realm of shadows."⁹⁷ As Fackenheim well puts it,

. . . if pure is to become applied logic it must become capable of having applications, and it can become so only by reencountering the contingent from which logical thought has abstracted, and by reimmersion in the finite above which logical thought has risen. This encounter and immersion, to be sure, result not in a surrender to the contingent and the finite but rather in their conquest. But if this is to be an actual conquest it requires the persistent reality of what is conquered by it.⁹⁸

The issue at stake here is the methodological and epistemological relation between the "facts" of non-philosophic life and cognitive experi-

ence, and the philosopher's "system" which re-enacts them *for* thought by transcending them *in* thought. Hegel's system seeks to *interpret* the "facts" of this life from the standpoint of their divine relations, penetrate them by a thinking conquest of both their finite cognitive and existential "contradictions" in order to demonstrate their significance in relation to God's redemptive and reconciling work, a work which, ontologically speaking, goes on "behind" them and "behind our backs." But the interpretation does not insist that our thought *is* the "fact" as such a fact is immediately ready-to-hand, as a lived existential reality where our finite awareness experiences the pain of the *immediate* contradiction. It seeks the "meaning" of such a fact, like the suffering of the innocent, in the larger context of God's purposes in creation and redemption, and this is therefore at once a religious and a philosophical "meaning." It seeks the *weltanschauliche*, speculative, ontological and, if you will, the redemptive, meaning. Viewed from the standpoint of a *later* reflection on the religiously existential *clairfied* meaning (which meaning is *cognitively* however already there implicitly "behind" every such fact as something subsequently rendered explicit by thought), we may be said to "bring our presuppositions with us" in order to interpret it, to make a "conquest" of it. Viewed from the perspective of how we get *to* this meaning in the reflective process, we *begin* with the "fact" and seek to mediate *its* meaning *by* our thinking. The fact, existentially speaking, in its contingent, confusing and personally catastrophic immediate reality, is not changed, only our inner understanding of its religious and speculative "meaning" in the larger scheme of things. We are now able to *endure* the contradiction; we do not pretend it no longer exists as a finite fact once it is so interpreted. 99

Religion and philosophy, then, provide a speculative scheme, one implicit and the other explicit, by which we may understand the *ultimate* significance of any event in nature and the history of finite spiritan event, which in its finite and contingent aspects, may be interpreted and discussed from many other perspectives in a purely finite way. That we are *able* to develop this sort of more "ultimate" interpretation is another way in which we may be said to bring our "presuppositions" with us in such a task. Man is a rational being made able to do so because he is made in the *imago dei*. This ability is "mediated," however, by the lived experiences we have with nature and in history which call it forth into cognitive fulfillment. And to presuppose this ability is to presuppose the *ultimate* unity of thought and being.

The point I wish to make here is that the truth of pure onto-logic as developed in speculative philosophy is not *simply* read into or out from the "facts" of nature and human history. It *emerges, arises* out of the *me-*

diation of our cognitive reflections *about* them, i.e., as a *result*. As a logically articulated conceptual *result* which is viewed as brought to any interpretive task having to do with nature and history, it is purely abstract and formal in its mode of expression, its systematic conceptualities. It is a "realm of shadows," and, as providing a knowledge of what God is in himself, it can be said metaphorically to be a purely formal knowledge of God as he existed "before" the creation of the finite world of nature and spirit. Nonetheless, it "animates" the other disciplines of philosophy because its application provides a way of "seeing" which, once gained from the concrete revelatory experiences of God given in nature and history, enables us to comprehend as in a "mirror" the systematic truth about nature and finite spirit as they essentially disclose the nature of God in himself and in his reconciling, redemptive relation to the world. Such a comprehensive way of seeing comprises the largest "scope" of the philosophic task and that is why philosophy as onto-logic can be methodologically distinguished from all those other philosophies "of" (e.g., right, religion, history) which help make up the huge Hegelian corpus! In *all* the tasks called "philosophical," Hegel says, "the universal and more abstract must come first," i.e., the *Begriff* and Idea of God as provided by ontologic, but "in fact," he says, "it is later in existence." 100 It is an onto-logic of God's nature "disclosed" in the concrete actualities of our experiences with nature and in history.

It is in terms of this conception of the scope of philosophy that theology and philosophy now may be seen more clearly as to their *difference*. Hegel says in one place, "the content of religion and philosophy is the sameleaving out, of course, the further details of external nature and finite mind [*Geist*] which fall outside the range

of religion."¹⁰¹ In terms of the interests of onto-logic, the ultimate concern of both philosophy and religion may be said to be the same to express a knowledge of God, though in a different form, to be sure. But from the standpoint of their "application" they also differ. Philosophy seeks a conceptual application of the truths of onto-logic to *all* the speculative questions about *all* the "facts" of nature and history, and especially questions about the proper way to see their systematic ontological relations. Religion has to do with the universally implicit knowledge of God as variously disclosed in the concrete religious traditions of man in history *and* as this knowledge provides both theoretical and practical guidance for the personal moral and corporate ethical demands of cultural existence. This understanding applies to the Christian tradition and the community of faith built upon it. Hence, Christian theology, which is the "science" of *this* religion, seeks to apply the "right" presuppositions of onto-logic to the moral, ethical, and distinctly religious concerns of this community inso-

far as these presuppositions are understood to be implicit in its *own* doctrinal *Vorstellungen*. It specializes in interpreting these *Vorstellungen* as peculiarly relevant to these concerns, at least in its dogmatic task as that has in turn presupposed its fundamental task. Its vocation is explicitly to serve *this* community, though always from the standpoint of *both* its inward confessional needs *and* its outward apologetic responsibility in any given era. It aims to be in this function *both* edifying *and* true!

Theologians, then, in their explicitly *fundamental* task do not touch on the "further details of external nature and finite spirit"; they *do* concern themselves, necessarily, with the truth of the onto-logic by which such a further larger philosophical task is undertaken. To be sure, any onto-logic which proceeded with erroneous assumptions about God's "transcendence" and "immanence" in relation to a philosophy of nature and of the history of finite spirit could not be adopted. But given the assumption such an onto-logic *is* compatible with Christian theistic claims, the theologian proceeds to a much narrower field of "application" the implications of such an onto-logic for understanding its own inherited creedal and cultic tradition as that tradition is redemptively significant for the religious need of this community and its resident culture in any given era. With this qualification, then, philosophy in its broadest scope as the science of *universal* truth, may be said interpretively to "include" *both* religion (i.e., as a philosophy of religion based on its significant historical forms, including Christianity, comprehended in thought) *and* theology (i.e., as such a philosophy of religion would involve a critical assessment of the ontological assumptions central to the fundamental and dogmatic tasks of the Christian theological enterprise).

The Problem of the Hermeneutic Circle

But Hegel assumes, as we repeatedly have seen, that his own philosophy, as the philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit, takes its "disclosure clue" from the Christian religious consciousness as that is historically brought to initial fulfillment in the Christ event. Both a "right" philosophy in its more comprehensive interpretive task *and* a "right" theology in its more specialized fundamental and dogmatic interpretive task begin with this assumption. And this, then, brings us straightway to the last issue of this section which must be squarely faced: the problem of the hermeneutic circle in any speculatively interpretive science.

From the standpoint of our interests in this chapter the problem can be formulated in the following manner. If Christian theology is dependent on what we have called a "right" philosophy, how does it determine mine which *is* a "right" philosophy, assuming it does not as-

say exhaustively to perform the fundamental task of its discipline solely by itself? The answer would seem to be that the theologian adjudges which philosophy is "right" by asking about its *appropriateness* to the distinctive character of the faith of the community as thematized in the inherited *Vorstellungen*. With the awareness of this distinctive character, especially in terms of its speculative implications for a true knowledge of God and his relation to the world, the theologian will then judge which speculative philosophy offers the most adequate conceptualities for the hermeneutic task of reinterpreting the dogmatic aspects of the community's own inherited witness of faith in any given era. Yet, if such a philosophy may be said to have the task of warranting the ontological conceptualities used by theology, and if theology may in turn be said to have the responsibility of warranting these conceptualities it uses as being those of a "right" philosophy appropriate to the distinctive character of its own faith and witness, then what warrants the judgment of *both* as to the *truth* of these conceptualities? After all, Hegel clearly assumes there were "wrong" philosophies as well as "wrong" theologies in his day, and he assumed there were rationally warrantable grounds for arguing about how one *knows* the difference between such "right" and "wrong" views. *That* assumption is what is at issue here. It is the issue about how one *knows* what constitutes "true" first principles in *all* interpretive thinking.

In as simple a way as I know how to put it, the *ultimate* epistemological warrant for the truth-status claims of any speculative philosophy (including his own) or any speculatively adequate theological system is the "witness of Spirit to spirits" in Christian terms, the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

What is to be of value to me [in faith] must have its verification in my own spirit, and in order that I may believe I must have the witness of my spirit. It may indeed come to me from without, but any such external origin is a matter of indifference; if it is to be valid, this validity can only build itself up upon the foundation of all truth, in the *witness of the Spirit*.

This principle is the simple principle of philosophical knowledge itself, and philosophy is so far from rejecting it that it constitutes a fundamental characteristic in it itself. 102

Hegel believed *both* the Lutheran Reformation *and* the Enlightenment shared this fundamental hermeneutic "subjectivity" principle, and the former may even be said, historically speaking, to have been the *religious* warrant for this principle (what we discussed earlier as the "Protestant principle") as it became legitimated in the emergence of the

revolutionary "secular" phenomenon of the latter. Thus, he writes that the "sheer obstinacy" which refuses

to recognize in conviction anything not ratified by thought . . . is the characteristic of our epoch, besides being the principle peculiar to Protestantism. What Luther initiated as faith in feeling and in the [subjective] witness of the spirit, is precisely what spirit, since become more mature, has striven to apprehend in the [speculative] concept [*Begriff*] in order to free and so to find itself in the world as it exists today. 103

Against all appeals to merely "external" or "traditional" heteronomous authority, appeals to either philosophical or theological "orthodoxies" of the past, comes the call of the modern world "be each of you *for yourselves* what you are all each essentially *in yourselves rational*."¹⁰⁴ The epistemological link between God and man which provides the final warrant in assessing all interpretive truth claims about "first principles" is the present ministering activity of the Spirit in our spirits as rational beings.

Human reason the consciousness of one's being is indeed reason; it is the divine in man, and Spirit, in so far as it is the Spirit of God, is not a Spirit beyond the stars, beyond the world. On the contrary, God is present, omnipresent, and exists as Spirit in all spirits, God is a living God, who is acting and working.¹⁰⁵

Ultimately, therefore, the final criterion of truth, both religiously theological and speculatively philosophical, is the witness of the Spirit to spirit in the form of self-conscious, self-confirming reason, and "the essence of spirit is freedom,"¹⁰⁶ freedom to think and decide for oneself about "truth."

This freedom as rational, one must be quick to add, however, is not an *arbitrary* [willkürlicher] or *merely* [bloss] subjective conviction. Freedom is bondage to the truth of Spirit as "objective," as the actuality of what *is*, grasped and held in thought, and which as objective, actual, grasps *us* by its own powerall of which is implied in Hegel's use of the noun *Begriff* and the verb *begreifen*.

It is true that personal conviction is the ultimate and absolute essential which reason and its philosophy, from a subjective point of view, demand in knowledge. But there is a distinction between conviction when it rests on . . . the particular nature of the [individual] subject, and when it rests on thought proceeding from acquaintance with the [Begriff] and the nature of the thing. In the former case conviction is [mere] opinion.¹⁰⁷

In traditional religious terminology, this means that "God as reason rules the world," and so

The more a man in thinking rationally lets the true thing or fact [die Sache] itself hold sway with him, renounces his particularity, acts as universal consciousness, while his reason does not seek its own in the sense of something special, the less will he, as the embodiment of this reason, get into that condition of opposition [which sets the truth of religion over against the truth of philosophy]; for it, namely, reason, is itself the essential fact or thing, the spirit, the Divine Spirit. 108

To say that "reason, spirit, the Divine Spirit" is at once the "objective" *subject matter* and also the "subjective" *means* of knowing may seem confusing, but Hegel's dialectical onto-logic requires this as its fundamental presupposition. It is, in fact, the insistence on the *incarnational* relation of the divine and human which permeates his own system.¹⁰⁹ And where is it that this ontological incarnational truth is first explicitly revealed *to* rational consciousness as something always implicitly assumed *in* rational consciousness? The answer is that it is so revealed in the historic Christ event. And here the hermeneutic circle of Hegel's philosophy closes under the warrant of the Spirit's witness. I quote again the crucial passage:

The history of Christ . . . is a history which belongs to the community since it is absolutely adequate to the Idea, while it is only the impulse of the Spirit toward this determination of the implicitly existing unity of the divine and the human which lies at the basis of and is to be recognized in those earlier forms. . . . It is the Spirit, the indwelling Idea, which has attested Christ's mission and this is the verification for those who [first] believed and for us who [now] possess the developed *Begriff*.¹¹⁰

The ultimate warrant, then, of a "right" philosophy (which of course *also* must be logically coherent and systematically adequate for helping to clarify and unify the *otherwise* confusing and apparently contradictory aspects of our lived human experience of alienation) is the witness of the Spirit to the Christ event as the decisive "disclosure clue" about God's nature and his relation to the world. A "right" philosophy is one which presupposes an incarnational onto-logic as there objectively "revealed" in time and space and subjectively confirmed by the Spirit. It follows, then, that a "right" theology must *also* approach the inherited tradition of its doctrinal *Vorstellungen* (in the Bible and in the creeds) with this *same* presupposition. A "right" philosophy can therefore provide "true" conceptual warrants over against a "wrong theology," and a "right" the-

ology can do the same over against a "wrong" philosophy. Given this "final" ontological incarnational presupposition, a "right" theology is "only throughout" what a "right" philosophy is which latter of course Hegel believed to be his own in the sense I detailed at the conclusion of the last chapter.

The final Hegelian premise at which we have arrived, then, is the methodological fact that hermeneutic ontological first principles, in terms of which a "right" philosophy can proceed to attempt to develop a "science" of onto-logic, nature and the history of finite spirit, are *ultimately* principles which are argued *from* and not *for*, as Whitehead has put it. Some experience or event in finite time and space becomes for the philosopher a religiously revelational "disclosure clue" for understanding the essential structures of the *whole* of human existence, the physical cosmos, and that which grounds them both. For Hegel this clue was the historic Christ event, as that event is adjudged, under the inner witness of the Spirit, to be the religiously central paradigmatic event by which the truth of what ultimately *is* and the *meaning* of human existence are decisively and explicitly disclosed to human consciousness. As we noted earlier, it functions with both mythic and existential power in human consciousness. It has mythic power because it discloses the fundamental structures of *ultimate Being* in which *human being* is located, and it has existential power because the truth of Being, now understood as essentially ordered by the universal principle of reconciliation, provides the grounds for human hope and courage in the face of life's *apparent* contradictions. It witnesses to a universal divine activity of redemption or reconciliation which teleologically "overreaches" all such existentially endured contradictions. And a

"right" theology in both its fundamental and dogmatic tasks assumes this same conviction.

The fact that Hegel in various contexts asserts that philosophy must begin *without* presuppositions is not a flat contradiction of this position. In those contexts he is arguing that thought *follows die Sache*, the immanent dialectical *actuality* of the world. So great was his confidence in the inner witness of the Spirit as illuminating the reason of man and in the unity of thought and being, that he believed only a willfully perverse decision *not* to see the truth could issue in any other conclusions. *If* we begin philosophy with the sincere desire to know the truth, the truth will, of necessity ("müssen" is his favorite verb here!), "manifest itself." He therefore can write,

As it is only in form that philosophy is distinguished from other modes of attaining an acquaintance with [the] sum of being, it must necessarily be in harmony with actuality and experience. In fact, this harmony may be viewed as at least an extrinsic means of testing the truth of a philosophy. 111

That is, to put it in my own words, *extrinsically* a "right" philosophy is "at minimum" one which provides the greatest width of intelligibility for organizing and clarifying in a coherent manner the widest reaches of human experience in the world. *Intrinsically*, however, the fundamental and personally decisive test of truth is the inward witness of the Spirit.

In the long run any philosophy is a proposal for "a way of seeing the world," and if someone should object to Hegel's own proposal and its "way of seeing" as made possible by the Christian witness of faith about the incarnational principle of reconciliation, Hegel, I believe, would reply that it is indeed *theoretically* possible to see it otherwise.¹¹² But he would insist that such an alternative philosophical system would, in the long run, both extrinsically and intrinsically fail to "see aright." It would both fail the hermeneutic test of adequately encompassing in logically coherent form the whole range of apparently irreconcilable and contradictory aspects of our modern cultural life, and also fail the test of personal existential satisfaction. It would provide no inner "peace," no "repose of spirit" in terms of which our historical life could be lived creatively and to the full. It would lack the spiritually healing confirmation of the Spirit's inner witness. In short, it would fail *religiously*, for a "right" philosophy ultimately seeks to articulate the meaning of human existence experienced in authentic religious consciousness when the soul is finally at rest. In a singularly beautiful, almost mystical passage, Hegel writes,

We know that in religion we withdraw ourselves from what is temporal, and that religion is for our consciousness that region in which all the enigmas of the world are solved, all the contradictions of deeper-reaching thought have their meaning unveiled, and where

the voice of the heart's pain is silenced the region of eternal truth, of eternal rest, of eternal peace.¹¹³

With this observation we end the present section. I have sought to demonstrate how I understand Hegel's views on the similar, yet also different task of the disciplines of theology and philosophy to be related to his christological convictions. I think the line of interpretation I propose, with its distinction between the fundamental and dogmatic tasks of the theologian, as these in turn are similar to the goal, form and content of philosophy and yet different from it in their scope of application and cultural function, offers a more manageable way of handling many otherwise confusing texts where radical predication of their identity *and* their disjunction are both seemingly affirmed side by side. It is hopefully *that* problem I have helped to resolve, especially in its christological implications.

Theology and Hegel's *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*

The last question I wish to raise is how, from a theological perspective, one may best understand what Hegel considered himself to be doing in the LPR*i.e.*, as those lectures have a bearing on the Christian theologian's task. The answer has been implicit in all I have said thus far, but now I want to make it explicit.

Given the fact Hegel argues that a speculative philosophy of religion cannot be written until the *Begriff* of religion and of God have been "consummated" in human historical consciousness, and the fact that he believes this latter has happened explicitly in the Christian religion as originating in the Christ event and developed in the church's creedal witness, Hegel's philosophy of religion is clearly intended by him to be *a philosophy of religion based on, i.e., epistemologically and methodologically normed by, the Christian fact*. And by "Christian fact" I understand Hegel to mean the historic revelational incarnation of God in the event of Jesus as the Christ and the church's subsequent witness of faith about that revelational event in Scripture, creed and cult.

The Significance of the LPR for the Task of Fundamental Theology

I propose that Hegel saw himself here, *in part*, providing a speculative prolegomenon exercise in what I have called the issues of a Christian "fundamental" theology, as that in turn would provide a more adequate form of speculative *Begrifflichkeit* by which the church's theologians could proceed to the confessional and apologetic aspects of the dogmatic task in their own day and for that matter, thereafter in the modern post-Enlightenment world. The clearest clue to this is the very negative things he has to say

about the failures of inadequate Christian theologies in the "Introduction" to these lectures, especially in the section on "the relation of the philosophy of religion to the current principles of the religious consciousness." 114 I am confinced he hoped to offer a "right philosophy" as that necessarily would inform the fundamental task of an adequate theology, because current theologians, in the name of "orthodoxy" or of "Enlightenment reason," were either proceeding uncritically and haphazardly in their use of speculative conceptualities in their dogmatic task, or they were opposed or indifferent to the need for such a fundamental task being undertaken at all.

But what is required in the task of a fundamental theology which Hegel, in the absence of an adequate one, sought to perform? The model which David Tracy has suggested in such a task is helpful

here.¹¹⁵ He suggests that there are three descending levels of special considerations which would constitute the concerns of a philosophy of religion based on the Christian fact. The first question which would need to be addressed is, "Is the religious interpretation of human existence valid (conceptually coherent) and meaningful (experientially adequate)?" The second is, "Is the theistic interpretation of the religious interpretation of human existence valid and meaningful?" And the third is, "Is the christological interpretation of the theistic interpretation of human existence valid and meaningful?" It is my conviction that Hegel in the LPR sought to demonstrate from a speculative perspective that a religious, theistic and christological interpretation of human existence is valid and meaningful in just Tracy's sense,¹¹⁶ and that he thereby sought to offer a new ontological *Begrifflichkeit* by which these convictions could be both publicly argued and articulated, and dogmatically "applied." In *this* sense, in terms of these convictions as there argued and articulated, it could be said that Hegel engaged in a "theological" task and if the performance of *that task* is what some would say identifies one as a "Christian" theologian, then to *that extent* Hegel was indeed such a theologian.

But Hegel was not, vocationally speaking, a theologian. He did not assay to be a dogmatic theologian in the sense we have defined it; he did not attempt to develop a dogmatic system in the traditional sense. What he did try to do, especially in the LPR, was *to re-enact in the form of speculative thought the christological understanding of God and his relation to man and the world normatively implicit in the already present faith and witness of the Christian community* to which as a Lutheran he claimed to belong.¹¹⁷ Rather than say as did J. McBride Sterrett that "Hegel was radically and

throughout a theologian,"¹¹⁸ it is much more accurate to say that as a philosopher he recognized the methodological importance of relating his own over-all speculative philosophical system, as the "science" of universal truth, to conceptual questions which also inform the nature of the "fundamental" reflective task of the theologian within the Christian communitya community whose historic witness involved the momentous religious truth claim that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19). Both as confessing member of this community and in terms of his speculative methodological concern as a philosopher, he clearly considered it necessary to show how his philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit, as the "science" of universal truth, was expressive of and compatible with the christological truth claims of the Christian religion. And this is certainly an important function of the task of the LPR, though it is an implicit motive, I believe, in the entire range of his philosophical system.

The Relation of the LPR to the Larger Speculative System

I obviously do not mean to imply that Hegel developed these lectures in the precise order of the questions Tracy delineates. A look at the LPR's "Table of Contents" will show that this is not the case. Nor do I intend to imply Hegel's *sole* concern here was to remedy deficiencies of current theological presuppositions and conceptualities. The LPR are *part* of the larger speculative system, and were *primarily* intended to be a further elaboration and "application" of the presuppositions of his speculative onto-logic to the cultural history of religion. But the fact that Hegel went to so much trouble and took so much space in these lectures to "apply" the significance of this one aspect of his over-all speculative system to help correct "current" philosophical misunderstandings adopted by certain theologians, as well as to show what new dogmatic possibilities for reinterpreting the traditional doctrines of the Trinity, Creation, the Fall, and the Incarnation are thereby made available, indicates to me that he clearly was trying to come to the assistance of what he considered the then-floundering theological enterprise. And this fact of his double intention, I think, is precisely why then and since the LPR have tended variously to be read by many vocational philosophers as either the self-conscious attempt to employ traditional Christian conceptualities as a metaphorical or mythological means for articulating what they understand to be an essentially non- or anti-Christian speculative system,¹¹⁹ or a particularly obnoxious form of special pleading for Christianity as the "true" religion couched in an otherwise learned and supposedly "scientific" philosophical form.¹²⁰ This is also why many of the church's theologians then and since, failing to distinguish between a speculative re-enactment of the Christian faith given in these

lectures, and an historical or confessional presentation of it, have tended to view it as a not-so-subtle and heterodox attempt to supplant the function of dogmatics as traditionally understood.

But these sorts of conclusions, I think, simply cannot be sustained by a careful textual reading of the LPR and those other texts throughout the system which address similar methodological issues. Hegel would never have considered his personal and partial intention to help articulate the philosophical foundations for a new post-Enlightenment Christian theological prolegomenon to have been a corruption of his primary concerns as a *philosopher* of religion. The LPR he believed to be and remain a publicly warrantable interpretation of man's universal religious consciousness and of its concrete expressions in the history of all religious traditions.¹²¹

If, then, in conclusion, a theologian is one whose task, in part, is to

engage in assessing and developing publicly warrantable hermeneutic criteria for arguing truth claims about a religious, theistic and christological interpretation of human existence, Hegel undoubtedly may be called in that very specialized sense a theologian, for he was concerned about a true knowledge of *God* as that was indeed, he firmly believed, normatively implicit in the witness of the Christian religion. Likewise, if a philosopher is one who seeks the truth of what *is*, what is actual, what is ontologically true within and beneath all finite appearances in nature and the history of finite spirit, then Hegel was indeed in that very expansive and classic sense a philosopher. But since *God* as the ever-creating and ever-reconciling Spirit *is* the truth of what *is*, Hegel could not be a philosopher in this latter sense without being a theologian in the former sense, without arguing for a religious, theistic and christological interpretation of human existence. And he therefore could be neither such a philosopher nor such a theologian without being a Christian believer, for, as far as he was concerned, the Christ event decisively disclosed the truth of what *is*. That event, understood as the historically decisive speculative disclosure clue, and known to be such by the witness of the Spirit within the Christian community, supplied him both with his "speculative middlepoint" as a philosopher and his normative understanding of what an adequate dogmatic theology must clearly articulate about the nature of *God* and his relation to the world. It is only the truth which is worth bothering about, he was fond of saying, and the truth as now consummately disclosed in that event can alone "silence" and "give rest" to man's troubled heart, for it is "eternal truth." 122 That is why in the long run theology and philosophy as similar and yet different conceptually interpretive

disciplines have any *human* importance at all. "What else would it be worthwhile to comprehend, if God is incomprehensible?"¹²³

That haunting question, together with a deep sense of intellectual respect for a philosopher who undertook in such a laboriously prodigious fashion to demonstrate that such comprehension is in fact possible, is what has made Hegel of such theological interest to me from the beginning of this project. The confidence that such comprehension is possible through faith in Jesus as the Christ is therefore what links Hegel's christological convictions to his view of the similar and yet also different tasks of theology and philosophy. And that, I hope, is what I have made clear in this chapter.

Conclusion

The hardest of all lessons in interpretation is to believe that great men mean what they say. 1

The preceding chapters have been a textually immanent attempt to demonstrate that Hegel meant what he said when he asserts that the doctrine of the Incarnation is the "speculative middlepoint" of his system and that the *Vorstellungen* of the history of Christ are, as contrasted with those of other bearers of divine revelation in human history, "absolutely adequate" for rising to a true speculative knowledge of God. It has been an exhausting and difficult task, for as Joseph Möller remarks,

The difficulties lie in the fact that the theological themes in Hegel can only be seen in the entirety of his thought and only thus disclose themselves in their significance. The knowledge of the complete Hegel must also be presupposed if more than only an illustration of passages is to be discharged.2

I have sought to keep the christological questions central to the task, but, as Möller notes, this central theme could not be adequately and fairly articulated without drawing into the discussion aspects of Hegel's whole system and corpus. Even though this made the task difficult, it is this very aspect which I think, in the long run, constitutes the central contribution of this essay to contemporary discussions of Hegel's thought.

Because I have tried up to this point to keep myself largely to a textually immanent exploration of Hegel's own christological views, however, it seems now in order to try to turn to a more

interpretively transcendent evaluation of these views. Accordingly, I will try to suggest, albeit in a very synoptic manner, how Hegel's christological convictions as here set forth may be interpreted as not only helpful for illuminating the

theological situation in his own day, but also ours, for as Eugene TeSelle rightly remarks,

We are all of us children of the nineteenth century in theology, even those who occasionally engage in parricide. . . . The nineteenth century is still with us as part of our living past . . . and in understanding it we can understand ourselves better. 3

Hegel's Christology in Retrospect

I take George Rupp's statement as axiomatic: "My contention is that variables in Christology are correlative with differences in approaches to and interpretations of personal, social, and cultural life."⁴ That is to say, the "shape" of Hegel's christology must be understood historically as related to the central personal, social and cultural problems which he saw facing his own era. If it is true that christology in the most general sense always may be said to have to do with an interpretation of the universal religious significance of the historic Christ event, it is also true that that interpretation is organized and informed by the concern to see that significance as having religiously clarificatory and redemptive possibilities for the peculiar cultural situation in which the interpretation is newly articulated. This is clearly true for Hegel.

The "shape" of Hegel's christological views was informed by his reading of the contemporary cultural situation as being without what I would call, in general terms, "inward spiritual substance." There was no "repose" of spirit possible in his day because, to use Hegel's own metaphor, "the inner star of Spirit," the Divine Spirit as illumining the mind and heart of the human spirit, had been eclipsed.⁵ In short, man had lost his religious self-confidence because he had lost his confidence in the reality of God, or at least,

in his ability to know the essential truth of that reality and how such a knowledge might serve to help in coping creatively with the deep cultural alienations which characterized the era. The sense of being "trapped" in the enigmas of finitude produced a deep sense of despair about "hope" for the whole human cultural project. It was a despair about finding a redemptive meaning beyond such enigmas, a meaning that formerly had been confidently thought to have been rooted in and disclosed by God himself, particularly in the Christian religion. In a particularly poignant passage in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel describes this situation.

The spirit [of man] . . . not only has . . . lost its essential life; it is also conscious of this loss and of the finitude that is its contents. The spirit is turning away from the husks and, confessing that it is in trouble and cursing, it now demands from philosophy not so much self-knowledge as that philosophy should help the spirit to establish such substantiality and the solidity of being. . . .

Formerly [other-worldly types of metaphysics] had a heaven furnished with abundant riches of thoughts and images. The significance of all that is used to lie in the thread of light that tied it to the heavens; and following this thread the eye, instead of abiding in the present, rose above that to the divine essence, to, if one may say so, a presence beyond. The eye of the spirit had to be directed forcibly to the things of this earth and kept there. Indeed, it took a long time to work that clarity which only the supernatural possessed into the must and confusion in which the sense [Sinn] of this world lay imprisoned; it took a long time to make attention to the present as suchwhat was called, in one word, experienceinteresting and valid.

Now the opposite need meets the eye: sense [Sinn] seems to be so firmly rooted in what is worldly that it takes an equal force to raise it higher. The spirit appears so poor that, like a wanderer in the desert who languishes for a simple drink of water, it seems to crave for its refreshment merely the bare feeling of the divine in general. By that which suffices the spirit one can measure the extent of its loss. 6

This quotation is significant, for it adds confirmation to Richard Kroner's apt judgment that, particularly from his Jena period onward, Hegel was called upon "to intellectualize Romanticism and to spiritualize the Enlightenment."⁷ The primary philosophical or cognitive task Hegel set for himself, as we saw in the last chapter, was to refute the epistemological "skepticism" and

resultant vague and vacuous religious "subjectivism" which owed themselves to Kant's "critical philosophy," especially as this pertained to questions of our ability to know the "objective" truth about God and his relation to the world. But this philosophical task was motivated by and assumed to be indispensable for the larger concern which moved Hegel from the time of his youth: to help nurture and provide direction for the *present* cultural life of his own people in the midst of its inner spiritual malaise and its consequent outward political conflicts and territorial dismemberment.⁸ He remained throughout true to his initial desire to be a *Volkserzieher* as a *Volkslehrer*. Indeed, the attack on "skepticism" and "subjectivism" which is directed toward Schleiermacher in the "Foreword" of Hinrich's book is ultimately of deep *cultural* concern for Hegel, not just theological. Such trends, he believed, paved the way for public "anarchy" where "every man does that which is right in his own eyes," and the spectre of

the political and social terrors of the French revolution never ceased to haunt Hegel as what lay ahead for Germany if its inner spiritual substance was not disciplined by careful reflection and by a renewal of religious confidence in the living God as the ground and guarantor of *all* creative cultural history.

The key issue for Hegel the philosopher, then, was to discover the *positive* spiritual meaning of the cultural present as that present could be shown to be, in spite of its apparent cognitive and practical alienations, a revelation of a higher and richer possibility of human experience and self-understanding. To put it another way, he sought to demonstrate how, speculatively speaking, what *appeared* to be a final negation of human cultural self-confidence in his own day could, and should, also be seen as *but a moment* in a divine theodicy which over-reaches all such malaise-ridden moments of self-doubt. Thus, as Hegel implies in the quotation given above, his philosophical concern is not to shun the world "in a monkish fashion" and fly away to an historically detached repose in a God who is utterly transcendent to and thus *beyond* the world, but to show how God is actively immanent *in* the world actualizing his reconciling and redemptive purposes for it. And that alone will grant the true inner "repose" by which all apparent and external contradictions can be endured. Out of such repose alone can creative action and hope for the future be culturally sustained.

It is precisely in the light of *this* cultural situation and its deeper spiritual need that we must seek to understand why the articulation of Hegel's christological convictions took the shape it did. The concern for developing a speculative concept of God as immanently *in relation* to man and the world, in contrast to a God

merely somewhere "beyond" the world as in English deism or even orthodox supernaturalism, indicates, for example, why he would be drawn to see in the christological doctrine of the *Incarnation* the "speculative middle-point" for his speculative project. In either of the cases just mentioned the world of nature and history is rendered so "distinct" from God that the idea of a thorough-going speculative doctrine of divine providence is challenged. In the case of deism, God has left the world to itself, presumably occupying himself with other more important divine affairs, or in the case of supernaturalism, God must periodically, even arbitrarily, intervene in a world whose relation to him has gone askew and which must be reminded forcefully from the "outside" that he is still in charge. For Hegel, the world of finite nature and history is indeed "other" than God, but not *wholly* other. It is always *essentially* overreached in its existential "moment" of otherness. Nature and grace are not two separate worlds, but the converse sides of each other. 9

I raise this issue only to point out that even if it could be shown to be true that Hegel logically may be said to have been a metaphysical "monist" or "pantheist" in the way he developed his onto-logic,¹⁰ there was a deep personal motivation *existentially* for stressing, maybe unduly as seen from a later perspective, the fact of God's immanence *in* the world. He wanted to stress that the world's apparent alienation from God as experienced in his own era was, ontologically speaking, *only apparent* if one takes seriously the speculative truth of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and the redemptive hope for human history which it has always nurtured within the church. True though it be that a truly Christian and theistic view of God must always include a properly balanced view of God's transcendence and immanence, it is also true that the cultural situation of some eras is such that one needs to hear more about the importance of his immanence. Barth in his era felt the need to emphasize the truth of God's transcendence as "wholly other" in relation to man and the world; Hegel clearly felt the need to emphasize the truth of God's immanence as "wholly present." And both, if read carefully, do not fail to maintain the respective converse truths.

Let me, however, keep to my primary christological interest as it relates to this nineteenth century cultural context and suggest that, from my point of view, Eugene TeSelle's analysis of this era is most helpful in pointing out how the three dominant influences in christological thinking in this century, Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel, all share the concern to articulate what he calls an "archetype" christology. By this he means "the view that Jesus is in some way the manifestation or actualization of the archetypal idea for all humanity."¹¹ That is to say, the overriding concern of these

three thinkers, christologically speaking, was to try to show in what sense Jesus has a *personal* and *present* religious significance for human self-understanding in the ongoing economy of God's redemptive work in the world. The emphasis was not on the Jesus of the past, but on the Jesus who, religiously speaking, remains decisively significant by coming to us in the present. For these thinkers who lived after the rise of the historical-critical method in the eighteenth century, the idea that historiographical science can ever produce absolute "certainty" about who the Jesus of the past "really was" in his inner self-consciousness, or that the "objective" results of such a science could ever provide an adequate basis of faith, was clearly unthinkable. For them, says TeSelle,

true religion is something more than mere belief that certain things happened in the past. This was not their point of departure. It is not that the historical process is unimportant all these men, in their different ways,

took it quite seriously. What they meant is that religious faith goes beyond mere knowledge or opinion about events in the past; whatever is said must have some pertinence to the believer in the present. They could quote Luther and many other writers to the same effect, that it is not enough to know *about* God or Christ but there must be some awareness of their importance "to me." Thus an aspect of subjectivity will quite naturally be central to their theological method, not as though they were ready to cut themselves loose from all controls and indulge their prejudices and impulses, but at least with the insistence that, *whatever* one is going to say, it must have some relationship to the subjectivity of the believer. . . . Their perspective . . . is characteristically embarrassed about the "positive," the merely factual and thus seemingly arbitrary features of the biblical tradition, and therefore it attempts to exhibit Christianity as the one purely rational and universally valid religion.

Furthermore, he goes on to say,

What is more worth noting is that the impulse is not an unusual one in Christian thought, and its most evident parallel is to be found in the Church fathers (or at least many among them, and the most influential), who were also concerned to show that the biblical message converged with the best philosophy of the age, sometimes correcting it, to be sure, but also finding in it many appropriate forms of expression and ways of relating faith to general human experience.

12

The key, then, to "placing" Hegel in this nineteenth century context of christological discussion is the concern shared with the other two major thinkers for the *present* significance of this Jesus who *once* lived as *now* subjectively, yes, one really must say *existentially*, experienced as "redemptive" for *my* human religious self-consciousness. Given this similarity, TeSelle then very subtly

and suggestively articulates what sorts of special emphases distinguish them.

To set them within a theological frame of reference we can perhaps classify them according to the articles of the Creed (understood as referring to the economy of salvation and the standpoint taken within it). In Kant we find a "Christology of the first article," in the sense that he was concerned with the general relationship of man to God and linked his Christology with an ideal to which all are called, juxtaposing this ideal, however, with their failure to come up to it, and stressing, as a consequence, their need for justification. In Schleiermacher we find a "Christology of the second article," in that he tried to give an account of the Christian consciousness as a specific feeling of dependence upon Jesus of Nazareth as the unique actualization of the ideal and denied the possibility of ever going beyond this direct dependence upon Jesus. In Hegel we find a "Christology of the third article,"

in that he emphasized, as against Kant, the transformation that can occur in human life, the real reconciliation with God and the real participation in the divine life that can come into being, and, as against Schleiermacher, the necessity of its occurring in each individual life and with a certain independence of the historical figure of Jesus. 13

His final appraisal of each man's christological views, built on this creedal analogy, is certainly provocative as a heuristic proposal and is worth quoting in full. What makes all their different emphases "legitimate," he says,

is that they have gained insight into three different aspects of the situation of man before God. The tradition stemming from Kant, which I have associated with the "first article," takes the perspective of the *beginning*man's potentialities and his freedom for self-actualization, God's promise or demand. It remains *prospective*, always looking ahead; it cannot endure to hear of any claims that the ideal has become adequately embodied within human life, for it knows only how to deal with an ongoing process that recedes into an infinite future. The tradition stemming from Schleiermacher, associated with the "second article," takes its perspective from *historical enactments*the partial and ambiguous achievements of men and women, their failures, and consequently their dependence upon redemptive events that have also been wrought out in the midst of human history. With Paul and Augustine and Luther, it practices a theology fitting to man *in pilgrimage*, confident that the resolution has already been offered, but also knowing that it remains outside oneself and can be appropriated only through struggle. The tradition stemming from Hegel, associated with the "third article," takes the perspective of the *eschaton* and sees the dawning of something that is final and satisfying even in the earthly present; although it may be prey to fanaticism or sentimentalism by claiming to see too much, it

can usually make good its claim that something is there to be seen, some aspect of *fulfillment*, of *fruition*. We need all these perspectives, and there is no way to absorb one into another, because they have apprehended different points along the road from potentiality to actualization or perhaps different aspects of the same point somewhere along that road.¹⁴

I have quoted TeSelle at such length because his understanding of the "third article" and "third moment" emphasis in Hegel is not only typologically suggestive, but it confirms my own suggestion that the "variable" in Hegel's christological emphasis is an explicit function of his larger *cultural* concerns as a child of his day. For Hegel the pressing spiritual need was for a sense of *historical confidence* that *all* history, including the culturally fractured and alienated history of the Germanic people, has its origin and *telos* in the eternal redemptive purposes of God. History could indeed be seen "realistically" as a "slaughter-bench"

of ever-repeated cultural "Good Fridays." Evil and sin abound and abide. Empires rise and fall again and again. The innocent are crushed and the unrighteous are the cruel victors who rape history for their own privately selfish purposes. Or so it seems. But like the experience of the Psalmist, Hegel could find no inner satisfaction in any such a cataloging of "realistic" facts, excruciatingly "real" though they be and as amply verified as they were in the devastating Franco-German conflicts of his own day. For him the personally existential (and attendant cognitive) question remained: "to what principle, to what final aim [have] these enormous sacrifices been offered?"¹⁵ Not "until," as it were, like the Psalmist, he "went into the sanctuary of God" (Psm. 73:1617) did he "find" the clue to the truth "beyond" such finite facts. For Hegel the "sanctuary" was the inner sanctuary of his own mind and spirit where, as illumined by the symbols of the Christian tradition, he experienced, as Paul Ricoeur has so aptly phrased it, a "second naïvete" about those symbols as disclosive of the essential revelatory truth about God and his relation to the world. For Hegel, these symbols, again in Ricoeur's terms, "gave rise to thought," speculative thought, and in that way became a new sacral or divine disclosure.¹⁶ As illumined by those symbols he now found it possible to affirm that "Resurrection" is the further side of every such cultural "Good Friday," and "Resurrection" is the eschatological moment of the truth of the "Incarnation""what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not 'without God,' but is essentially His work." "Only *this* insight," he says, "can reconcile Spirit with the History of the World."¹⁷

Whatever one may think of the way Hegel developed his christological convictions, as being either theologically

"heterodox" or "orthodox," this is what we must understand to be the fundamental revelatory "insight" which shaped his discussions. It is the *ever-present* and redemptive possibility of this Christian insight about the *ever-present* Divine Spirit's work in and through human cultural agency which led him to stress the importance of the symbol of the *present* Christ, the *gegenwärtigen Christi*, over against a merely historical preoccupation with the Jesus who "came into the world nearly two thousand years ago."¹⁸ Thus, he characteristically insists,

The process of salvation takes place in the heart and spirit alone. . . .
The Spirit of Christ actually fills the human heart. Christ is therefore not to be taken merely as an historical person, but man has an immediate relation to him in spirit.¹⁹

It is in the worship of the believing community that "the perception of the divine Spirit" about "the present, indwelling, living Christ as self-

consciousness has attained to actuality [Wirklichkeit]," 20 i.e., has attained to actuality as the truth of our *own* self-consciousness as made in the *imago dei* and as the truth which thereby releases in us the confidence that we, like him, can pass through *our* Good Fridays to *our* Resurrection in and through creative historical actiona confidence asserted in spite of the also ever-present tendency to despair about the hope that any such action has an ultimately transcendent significance for ourselves or for others. In TeSelle's terms, Hegel stresses the aspect of *present* fulfillment and fruition of redemption which *actually occurs* in our own self-consciousness by faith in Jesus the Christ, because, given the malaise of spirit which confronted him in the personal, social and cultural problems of his day, it was precisely this aspect of the truth of the Christian witness which needed most to be stressed. Any retrospective attempt to understand the reason his christological convictions took the peculiar theological and speculative shape they did must understand this personal, social and cultural "variable" which affected their articulation. That is the central point I wished to make here, and that, together with TeSelle's typological suggestions as to how one might place Hegel's distinctive christological emphases in the general nineteenth century context of such discussion, provides us with a helpful historico-theological frame of reference in terms of which we are now better prepared to ask about the possible significance of Hegel's christology for our own day.

Hegel's Christology in Prospect

The similarities between both the cultural and theological situation of our own day and that of Hegel's seem to me quite striking. At

least in the Western world after World War II one could say that we too have been afflicted with a similar malaise of spirit, a loss of inner self-confidence about the meaning, the purpose, the goals of the whole human project in history, a loss of "inward spiritual substance" which intellectually speaking is perhaps no better represented than in the works of Jean Paul Sartre. There is therefore an almost eerie correspondence between the cultural forms of philosophical "skepticism" and religious "subjectivism" present in Hegel's day and those of our own which together imply the same threat of a disintegrating social and political order. The ultimate metaphysical agnosticism of most contemporary philosophers (who still derive their primary presuppositional warrant from Kant's first *Critique*) and the systematic tendency to reduce reli-

gion or religious "experience" to its non-cognitive or even purely emotive significance (which again betrays at least an implicitly Kantian and also Romantic heritage) have helped to produce an atrophied collective spiritual consciousness. Among other things, the ethical questions of public life are consistently reduced to political strategems of "power" rather than elevated to conceptual issues of "right" and the radically privatized personal conscience has no certainty of values beyond its own ultimately arbitrary and conflicting preferences. Truth has become a widow without children.

At least in America these issues represent the peculiarly poignant forms of cultural alienation which we have in common with Hegel's day.²¹ The dramatic events of the sixties in this country certify how pervasively this sense of alienation is represented not just among the intelligentsia, but at the concrete social level in the common life. Whatever sorts of christology are to be articulated in our day, then, it seems quite clear they will have to articulate themselves, in their confessional and apologetic dimensions, in a way that will seek to offer a hope for the recovery and fulfillment of man's *authentic* subjectivity, his true, substantial and, indeed, publicly responsible rational selfjust as did Hegel's.

The theological situation of Hegel's day as it bears on christological issues is also strikingly similar to ours. The issue of the relation of faith to historical knowledge, for example, remains indeed *the* burning issue if one is to judge from all those many works on "biblical theology" which continue to heave and struggle so mightily over the "hermeneutic task" and its "correct" presuppositions.²² This problem, of course, is a function of the

larger issue of the relation of faith and reason, or in theological terms, "special" and "general" revelation, and it is critical for that more precise issue as to how our historical knowledge of Jesus is related to our present experience of Jesus in his function as the Christ. It is the same issue, expressed in all these ways, as the problem of the relation of religious *Vorstellung* to speculative knowledge, and more particularly the relation of the *Vorstellungen* about Jesus to a "true" knowledge of God. It is my judgment that Hegel is immensely more helpful (because much more critically subtle) for helping to get one's logical and hermeneutic "bearings" on how to approach this christological issue than many contemporary theological discussions of it. Why so?

In the first place, Hegel's christology characteristically showed no interest in questions about the personal dynamics of Jesus' "inner life" in his function as the Christ.²³ Thus, TeSelle notes that all of the major nineteenth century German thinkers did not try

to characterize the "real" Jesus as he was in himself; they were too well appraised of the difficulties of both the historical and the dogmatic methods to attempt that. Instead they were looking at the meaning of Jesus for other persons, or for the believing community, or for humanity in general, and they knew that their point of departure in doing this must be the human consciousness, not Jesus in himself, who remained problematical. 24

In this issue one may say that for Hegel, as Schubert Ogden has put it in our own day, the meaning of the christological assertion that "Jesus is the Christ" is at bottom an "existential" meaning which has to do with the question of man's potential and actual relation to God;

it re-presents the word that is addressed to us and to all men in Jesus as the decisive word about our own human existence, as the word that answers all our deepest questions about God because it tells us explicitly and finally who we ourselves are given and demanded to be.25

Hegel, I believe, could find no reason at all to quarrel with Ogden's carefully formulated premise that kerygmatically speaking, "Jesus himself is the predicate by which the subject that we are ourselves is definitively interpreted."²⁶ It is the *present* relation of Jesus to *our* consciousness, to our self-understanding, as the continuing possibility of the true disclosure of God in his relation to us which causes us to call him "the Christ." To put it perhaps yet another way, it is the use to which God in our present puts the already existentially interpreted witness about Jesus (i.e., biblical *Vorstellungen*) that constitutes for Hegel his divinity, or better, his ever present divine function. For Hegel it is the peculiar "adequacy" of these historically rooted *Vorstellungen* to reveal God

which constitutes the context in which the doctrine of the Incarnation is to be discussed. It is, to use the conceptualities I defended above in Chapter 3, the paradigmatic and mythical *meaning* of these *Vorstellungen* as seen under the guiding inner witness of the Holy Spirit in terms of which his "christhood" is to be constitutively understood.

Hegel, of course, understood *all* history as the locus of God's providential action to redeem man, but he also assumed that *all* human beings possess both the personal freedom and responsibility consciously to cooperate in the fulfillment of that providence even if the "cunning of reason" outflanks human decisions at what we might perhaps call the "unconscious" level, i.e., when men "consciously" in their evil deeds may indeed seek to resist that providence.²⁷ Problematic though this

latter concept may be (the relation between belief in *real* human freedom and the belief that God's purposes for history cannot *ultimately fail* has always been a knotty issue for theologians to try to articulate coherently), Hegel clearly implies that in the case of Jesus there must have been a genuine human *conscious willingness* to "cooperate" with God's purposes through his witness and deeds in order for his life to be able to be so "used" later by God as the explicit and decisive revelation of himself which norms all others in history. And what this means, in traditional terms, is that Hegel's christology was essentially "adoptionist." He was not interested in a "consciousness christology." About why God providentially "chose" Jesus rather than someone else, about how this relation was perceived inwardly by Jesus, or whether Jesus was always perfectly responsive to God's will at every moment of his historical life about all this Hegel is characteristically, and from the standpoint of his own hermeneutic presuppositions, necessarily silent. As Ogden notes, the "typical" trend of most contemporary christologies, even those who otherwise seek to be theologically "revisionist," is that "Jesus is understood to be God for us, finally, because, unlike us, he perfectly actualized the possibility of authentic faith and love."²⁸

Hegel is clearly a better contemporary guide on this sort of christological question simply because he had a solid methodological instinct for carefully distinguishing between matters of Christian *beliefs* about the Jesus of history, which are in principle at least open to revision and correction by historical science, and matters of Christian *faith* in relation to that same Jesus, which are not open to revision (for the true believer, that is) because they have to do with the way in which the biblical witness

to this historic event provides a revelatory paradigmatic and mythical "insight" into the nature of reality, of God and his relation to the world. And it is precisely this aspect of the Christian claim to "finality" about the revelatory character of the Christ event that for Hegel was, in his terms, its "speculative" significance. It is to this insight of faith that he wished to be confessionally faithful and in terms of which he sought to be apologetically articulate. And that brings us to the second reason I feel Hegel offers us such helpful critical assistance in our contemporary christological task.

Hegel was acutely aware that all hermeneutic "presuppositions," like those which are employed above, for example, to make a distinction between faith in Jesus as the Christ and historical beliefs about the man Jesus, must not be advanced arbitrarily or haphazardly, as we saw in the last chapter. He believed they could and should be systematically argued for within the public context of rational discourse, and that meant they must be able to be critically defended in terms of what always re-

solves itself to be a matter of uniquely *philosophical* questions. An "adequate" christology for him was one whose claims to religious and speculative truth could be *understood*, rationally understood, by anyone willing to accept the validity of the criteria of logical coherence, width of intelligibility, and adequacy to lived experience when engaging in responsible public discourse about *any* truth claims.²⁹ Its confessional content, which from the standpoint of theological method must also meet the criterion of depth in tradition, must not fail to be articulated apart from such considerations, for to proceed otherwise would imply not only that one must first have some "special" gift for rightly comprehending the conceptual aspect of that claim to truth which is not possessed by all human beings universally, but also, and in strict correlation with this, that those who choose not to accept the church's witness to Christ as God's "final" revelation of his will for mankind cannot be held responsible for failing to do so.³⁰ In short, in making its confessional witness it must also seek to be apologetically, in this sense, rationally, convincing.

This obviously does not mean, for Hegel or for me, that such a correct conceptual understanding of the church's christological witness, as one rationally respectable *possibility* among other rival religious truth claims, inevitably or automatically will elicit from the listener the confessional claim of *faith* that it is *in fact* the "best" or "truest" such claim. For in the experience of faith, as I understand it, one does not simply cognitively *assent* to a religious truth claim, but one is also called upon personally to decide to *act* upon that claim, to seek faithfully to re-order one's entire life in keeping with that vision of human limitations and possibilities which such a claim about what is "ultimately real" necessarily

implies. Believing something is true *about* God is not the same thing as believing *in* God. Rather, what this means is that for a christology to be truly adequate from an apologetic point of view, it must seek to find precisely those "right" ontological and speculative philosophical conceptualities and modes of linguistic expression which, in terms of the cognitive aspect of the Christian truth claim, most coherently express the conviction that the only God ever truly experienced "everywhere and by all" is the same God who has spoken to us in a revelatory decisive way in the history of Jesus who is the Christ. "We call Jesus the Christ," Van Harvey says, "because he discloses that reality encompassing every man but that not all acknowledge and interpret aright."³¹

This is essentially Hegel's christological point of view too, at least as I read him, but he was much more exercised than some modern "biblical" theologians about how inadequate philosophical hermeneutic presuppositions could in fact obscure or deform the revelational "content" of the

scriptural witness to Christ. He, of course, had his *own* presuppositions about the ontologically immanent nature of the universal "divine-human unity" in terms of which he unpacked the speculative "meaning" of the Incarnational witness of Scripture. It is surely debatable whether this is the *only* "right" set of presuppositions to do this task, and in the end Hegel closed the hermeneutic circle by appealing directly to the inner witness of the Spirit to "certify" his own presuppositions as the "right" ones for this task. But his warning about the haphazard and arbitrary adoption and use of any such set of presuppositions in doing a christology "based on the Bible" is also surely appropriate. It is his insistence on the theological exegete's responsibility for a thoroughly critical self-awareness of what he is bringing *to* the text, and his responsibility for trying publicly to warrant it in rational terms, that, I feel, makes him so instructive for our own present christological tasks especially in terms of the "fundamental" task of the dogmatic theologian. The example he left us in this regard as he set forth his own christological convictions is indeed a salutary one. Barth knew this and, in his characteristically candid and sympathetic manner of dealing with the thought of those with whom he otherwise thoroughly disagrees, wrote.

Again and again we find we must think three times before contradicting [Hegel's philosophy], because we might find that everything we are tempted to say in contradiction of it has already been said within it, and provided with the best possible answer. 32

This, then, finally brings me to the third reason why I find Hegel's own christological approach is so provocative as we face our own contemporary christological task. It is an implication of all I have said thus far. It is the fact that he sought to relate the significance of

the christological truth claim to the total inherited and present cultural experience of mankind. Hegel was convinced that truth is *one* and so he attempted to demonstrate that the *ultimately* convincing power of the Christian witness lies in its potential for integrating and unifying the whole of human lifepersonal and corporate. Against all dualistic epistemological or ascetic conceptions of a radically "other worldly" and ghettoized Christianity, he believed, with St. Augustine, that all truth is of God, and that the decisively convincing redemptive significance of Jesus as the Christ is not that he served to condemn the worst in us (which he indeed did), but that he confirms, strengthens and nurtures hope for the best that is in us as made in the *imago dei*. This is why, as TeSelle's analysis pointed out, Hegel stressed, no doubt over-much, the "already" aspect of the Kingdom's salvational *presence* among us instead of its

"not yet" or "in part" character. And that emphasis, as I have tried to point out, is a function of his concern to show how the apparent contradictions on the plane of reflection and the plane of life in his own day were *only* apparent i.e., when viewed from the standpoint of confidence in the incarnational principle of reconciliation and providence which he believed the Christian faith to offer as disclosed in the Christ event.

It is at the time that a culture despairingly comes to believe the worst about man and therefore loses hope that a strong theological counterbalance is needed which positively stresses the best about him and thereby rekindles hope. If one keeps that in mind, one can perhaps better understand, and therefore forgive, those elements in Hegel's thought which in retrospect seem sometimes to unqualifiedly optimistic about the unique world-historical destiny of the Protestant Germanic people and its bourgeois culture.

Furthermore, as I tried to show in Chapter 3, Hegel himself was no romantic idealist about a necessary ever-upward, ever-onward dialectical lockstep progressive march to human perfection in history. He was clearly more of a "realist" on this issue than many modern critics recognize. The path from Incarnation to Resurrection is and always will be routed through man's agonizing cultural Good Fridays.

If it is true that much of recent theology has found itself more and more inexorably drawn to return to the unfinished intellectual agenda of its great nineteenth century "fathers," the reason for this is that after the demise of Neo-orthodoxy the conception of a Christianity radically disjunct from culture has become for us as confessionally and apologetically problematic as one simplistically

identified with it. After so much insistence upon the Word of God *over against* the word of man, there is apparently a craving to find a continuing Word of God *within* the word of man—that is, within the universal and cultural word of man which expresses his true and continuing *authentic* self as made in the *imago dei*, that word toward which the witness of Jesus as the Christ is addressed in order to help discipline, nurture and fulfill it.

In terms of the current tendency to distinguish between "high" and "low" christologies, which I think is always methodologically problematic,³³ Hegel's could equally well be characterized as both "high" and "low." It can be said to be "high" because it took seriously the fact that the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ witnesses to an eternal ontological redemptive truth in terms of which the Christian claim to truth has both universal and cosmic significance. It also can be said to be "low" because it insisted the explicit confirmation of that truth was owed not to the fact that a unique metaphysical being had to enter history to

make it possible for us to learn that, as if it were otherwise unknowable or completely forgotten. Instead, this confirmation is owed to the fact that this otherwise implicitly inward truth "known everywhere and by all" is dramatically called to explicit consciousness by the way in which a man very much like us, who once lived *long ago* in Palestine, is continually rendered *present* to us by the witness of the Spirit in the *kerygma* of the church. It is rendered present as *our* continuing possibility for such a dramatic and explicit self-understanding.

Here again, Hegel is much more subtle in his christology than is frequently recognized. In our criticism of his thought we would do well to "think three times," as Barth says, "whether it was not in fact the *genuinely* theological element in Hegel" which made his "modern" theological *and* philosophical contemporaries "shrink back" from him. "Theology had, and still has, no occasion to throw stones at Hegel, as if it had not trodden the same path as he, only in not so firm or so logical a manner as he did." That is why even Barth could suggest that he yet had "perhaps also a great promise."³⁴ And if, as George Rupp suggests, "The question remains as to whether or not renewed consideration of Hegel's philosophy offers the possibility of a viable theological position after the demise of Neo-orthodoxy,"³⁵ then my own answer would be that the prospects seem reasonably good, at least from the perspective of his christological insights. This is not just because his thought intended to be, and I think was, definitively and self-consciously Christian, but also because he, perhaps almost alone since his time (the one most obvious exception being Whitehead), took such pains to develop a fully articulated speculative schema for demonstrating how a Christian view of things offers the most convincing

possibility for illuminating and unifying the fragmented, divided and alienated cultural consciousness of the post-Enlightenment modern world. Judging from all the signs around us that such a consciousness is still very much with us (and perhaps even with a greater vengeance than is his own day), we can use all the help we can get in such an apologetic task. It seems quite clear to me that we will likely get more philosophical and theological help from Hegel in that task than from almost anyone who has lived after him. It is my hope this essay has shown why and how this might be the case.

Notes

Introduction

1. Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1967, p. 242).
2. Fackenheim, of course, has made the same general methodological point in a very convincing manner. I am clearly indebted to his analysis and my intention is to carry forward this form of interpretation, but with special reference to Hegel's christological conceptualities. In taking this position along with Fackenheim I therefore simply cannot agree with those interpreters of Hegel who suggest that he was just a humanist in disguise (e.g., Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* [New York: Doubleday, 1965], pp. 271275) or quite muddleheaded in the way he sought to embody traditional theological and specifically Christian conceptualities in his philosophical system (e.g., Gustav E. Mueller, *Hegel: The Man, His Vision and Work* [New York: Pageant Press, 1968], pp. 287 and 328).
3. In one classic passage, for example, he explicitly went out of his way to include himself in the confessional circle of "we Lutherans" and then added parenthetically, "I am and intend to remain one" (*Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simpson, 3 vols [New York: Humanities Press, 1963], 1:73). For the location of this text in the German edition, see *G. W. F. Hegels Werke: Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden der Verewigten*, 2nd edition, 18 vols. (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 18401848), vols. 1315: *Vorlesungen über*

die Geschichte der Philosophie, ed. Carl Ludwig Michelet, 13:89.
Further references to this German edition will be abbreviated
Werke.

In addition, later references to the English edition of these particular lectures will be abbreviated as LHP and references to the German text as VGP. When the quotations are reproduced from the LHP, the location in the German text will be given in parentheses following e.g., LHP, 1:73 (VGP, 13:89). When the quotations are my own translation, the procedure will be reversed e.g., VGP, 13:89 (LHP, 1:73). This form of citation procedure will be followed throughout

the essay in connection with the English and German editions of all Hegel's works.

4. Fackenheim is correct, I think, in noting that the "virtually universal error" in interpreting the relation of Hegel's thought to Christianity consists in confusing his attempted *speculative re-enactment* of the Christian witness of faith with an explicitly confessional or historical presentation of it (p. 119). It is just this sort of confusion which is behind John McTaggart's conclusion that "Hegel's doctrines are incompatible with any form of Christianity which has ever gained acceptance among men" (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* [Cambridge: University Press, 1901], p. 250).

5. For two recent surveys of the expanding corpus of Hegel literature, see Walter Kern, "Hegel Bücher 19611971," *Theologie und Philosophie* 47 [Heft 2] (1972): 245276, and Frederick G. Weiss, A Critical Survey of Hegel Scholarship in English, 19621969," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (July 1971): 203222.

6. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. E. B. Spiers and J. B. Sanderson, 3 vols. (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 1:151. For the location of this text in the German edition, see *Werke*, vols. 1112: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Philipp Marheinecke, 11:146. Hereafter, references to the English edition of these lectures will be abbreviated as LPR and references to the German text as VPR.

7. LPR, 3:113 (VPR, 12:320321).

8. *Menschwerdung Gottes: Eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer Künftigen*

Christologie (Freiburg: Herder, 1970).

Among the many other books since 1960 which in one way or another only briefly discuss Hegel's christology, see the following which give more extensive treatment of it: Hayo Gerdes, *Das Christbild Sören Kierkegaards, verglichen mit der Christologie Hegels und Schleiermachers* (Düsseldorf: E. Diederichs, 1960); Wolf-Dieter Marsch, *Gegenwart Christi in der Gesellschaft* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1965); George Rupp, *Christologies and Cultures* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974); and Eugene TeSelle, *Christ in Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

9. This merit is counterbalanced, in my opinion, by the failure of Küng, contrary to what he says is his central intention in the book (p. 503), to enter into a real *Auseinandersetzung* with Hegel a point well made by Joseph Fitzer in his article, "Hegel and the Incarnation: A Response to Hans Küng," *Journal of Religion* 52 (July 1972):240267. The problem is that he constantly invokes *the* New Testament witness of faith against Hegel, as if it is already quite clear what *the* witness is and what a "right" interpretation requires. For example, on the question of the "suffering of God" (see pp. 522556) he says that "classical" notions are inadequate to express the definitive Christian meaning of this, as are Hegel's (p. 554). His evidence: the *biblical* stress on God's transcendence and "historicity." But *that* is precisely the logical issue at stake to try to "mediate" in a conceptually coherent way these apparent incompatibles of God's changeless character "beyond history" and his changing character in his interaction with man "in history." Küng wants to say both things about God, but so did Hegel.

The point is that Künig and Hegel simply differ on the proper hermeneutic which is required to determine what is indeed "biblical." Even though Künig stresses this volume is only a "prolegomenon," he is still responsible for doing something better in arguing with Hegel than merely to state at certain crucial theological junctures that he was not "biblical."

10. For all its synoptic brevity and otherwise more specific interests, Wolfhart Panenberg's essay, "The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel," in his *The Idea of God and Human Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), pp. 144177, is very helpful in this regard. See also Rupp, pp. 83158, and TeSelle, pp. 47125. Certainly one also would want to consult Claude Welch's *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

11. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper, 1964), pp. 6670, 107, 128. For the location of these references in the German edition, see *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), pp. 911, 40, 5657. Hereafter references to the English translation will be abbreviated as *Phen.* and references to the German text as *Phän.*

Judging by Hegel's own frequent practices, it should be noted that the idea of the "superfluity" of such extended introductions was a principle of scholarly advice which he himself apparently found easier to give than to follow!

Chapter One
Christology, Christianity and Volksreligion: The *Jugenschriften* and

the *Volkserzieher*

1. Hegel, *Hegel's theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Herman Nohl (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907), p. 321. For the location of this text in the English edition, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox, with an Introduction and Fragments trans. by Richard Kroner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 278. Hereafter, references to the English edition will be abbreviated as ETW and references to the German text as HTJ. Since not all of HTJ has been translated in the ETW, some citations are to the German text only and are therefore my translations.
2. ETW, 312 (HTJ, 348).
3. See, for example, Walter Kaufmann, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), pp. 129161, and *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, pp. 145.
4. Phen., pp. 88 and 135 (Phän., pp. 26 and 67).
5. *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight, 17701801* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
6. Ibid., p. 390. Harris' excellent book, which is dedicated to sustaining this thesis, is a fitting answer to J. N. Findlay's opinion that "The Juvenalia of Berne and Frankfurt . . . have thrown very little light on any major notion or position in Hegel's mature work." See Findlay's "Foreword" to *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. vii.

7. Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 19521954), 1:5960. Hereafter references to these volumes will be abbreviated *Briefe*.
8. ETW, 308 (HTJ, 381).
9. Cf. ETW, 278 (HTJ, 321).
10. Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, trans. and ed. by Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 286.
11. Hegel, *Briefe*, 1:2425; translated by Harris, p. 184. Th. G. von Hippel's *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie* was, according to Harris, "a semi-autobiographical novel, full of reflections which Hegel and a group of friends read together at the *Stift*" (*Ibid.*). The italics in the quotation are Hegel's.
12. See, for example, his statement in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* where he observes that ". . . it is not difficult to see that our time is a time of birth [eine Zeit der Geburt] and the transition to a new period. The spirit [of man] has broken with the former world's manner of existing and expressing itself, and is at the point of letting it sink into the depths of the past and working toward its own transformation" (*Phän.*, 15 [*Phen.*, 75]).
13. See *Hegel's Development*, xvii-xix, 4546, 162. Hegel originally hoped to enter the field of law as the context for his role as a *Volkserzieher*, but his father insisted he should go on to the study of dogmatic theology. Because of the conservative theological

orientation of the Tübingen faculty under the leadership of G. C. Storr, Hegel chafed under this requirement. See *ibid.*, p. xix.

14. If Harris and Gisela Schüler are correct, and the so-called "Earliest System-Programme of German Idealism" was in fact written by Hegel in Berne in 1796, and not by Schelling, then there can be no question that the larger concern which lies behind Hegel's earliest writings on religion in the *Jugendschriften* was the effort to work out "the principles for a history of mankind" and to "strip the whole wretched human work of State, constitution, government, legal system to the skin." Translated from the fragment by Harris, p. 511. See his appendix discussion of this piece, pp. 249257.

15. Two other recent studies, in addition to Harris, have also stressed this point. See Raymond Plant's *Hegel* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1973) and Franz Gabriel Nauen's *Revolution, Idealism and Human Freedom: Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel and the Crisis of Early German Idealism* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971).

16. See J. Glenn Gray, *Hegel and Greek Thought* (New York: Harper, 1968). This book was originally printed under the title, *Hegel's Hellenic Ideal* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941).

17. HTJ, 20. Harris gives the only English translation of this extended but fragmentary essay on pp. 481509. He designates it by the opening words, "Religion ist eine," in order to distinguish it from other fragmentary revisions of the essay lumped together by Nohl under the general rubric, "Volksreligion und Christentum."

18. LPR, 1:247 (VPR, 11:241).

19. ETW, 67167 (HTJ, 137240).

20. HTJ, 2021.
21. HTJ, 75.
22. ETW, 68 (HTJ, 153).
23. ETW, 82 (HTJ, 163).
24. See "The Positivity of the Christian Religion," ETW, 175 (HTJ, 145), where Hegel uses precisely this language.
25. HTJ, 87.
26. HTJ, 78.
27. HTJ, 87.
28. HTJ, 89.
29. HTJ, 102.
30. HTJ, 67.
31. See HTJ, 5657.
32. "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," ETW, 211 (HTJ, 266).
33. ETW,, 304 (HTJ, 379).
34. "Fragment of a System," ETW, 312313 (HTJ, 348).
35. See Harris, pp. 2728.
36. This phrase is taken from Harris' translation of the "Earliest System-Programme," *Hegel's Development*, p. 511.
37. ETW, 175 (HTJ, 146).
38. ETW, 68 (HTJ, 153).

39. ETW, 69 (HTJ, 154).
40. ETW, 71 (HTJ, 155).
41. Ibid.
42. ETW, 170 (HTJ, 141).
43. While Harris admits "Hegel sometimes uses the word 'positive' in a quite neutral, descriptive way," he nonetheless concludes, "As such, 'positive faith' and 'positive religion' are *always* regarded by Hegel as evils" (p. 225, n. 2; my italics). "Always" is too strong, for the significance of the 1800 revision is precisely that here Hegel does seek to legitimate the fact that the "positive" aspects of religion are not *necessarily* evil in themselves. They only can *become* so. George Rupp also underscores this point about the 1800 revision. See his *Christologies and Cultures*, pp. 111112.
44. ETW, 167 (HTJ, 139).
45. ETW, 172 (HTJ, 143).
46. ETW, 169 (HTJ, 141).
47. ETW, 172 (HTJ, 143).
48. Ibid.
49. ETW, 176 (HTJ, 145146). Knox's translation is here, as throughout, a bit free. The first clause of this statement might more tightly be rendered, "I am assuming from the start that in human nature itself there 'is' the requirement of acknowledging a higher reality [or Being; German *Wesen*] than that which is the act of our consciousness. . ." Hegel recognizes this whole issue of man's nature and his relation to God cannot be adequately resolved "without in the end becoming a metaphysical treatment of the

relation between the finite and the infinite" (ETW, 176 [HTJ, 146]). Thus the "is" is italicized in the German text to

indicate that religion is not simply a matter of *human agency* alone, not a mere matter of Kantian moral *obedience* with hope in immortality as a moral postulate undergirding it. No, it 'is' a union, or dialectically expressed, a *reunion* of finite and infinite in the *present*. This conception is worked on in the 1798 piece "On Love" and the "Fragment of a System" written during the same year as the revision of the "positivity" essay (see ETW, 302319). In these essays "Life" and "Love" become the key analogues pointing to this "metaphysical relation." It is in these new conceptualities that we find foreshadowed the dialectical philosophy of the Absolute as Spirit articulated in the later system.

50. ETW, 173 (HTJ, 144); italics his.
51. HTJ, 147 (ETW, 177).
52. HTJ, 141 (ETW, 169).
53. ETW, 313 (HTJ, 348).
54. "Das Leben Jesu," HTJ, 75.
55. HTJ, 142143 (ETW, 171).
56. ETW, 170 (HTJ, 142).
57. ETW, 169 (HTJ, 141).
58. ETW, 171 (HTJ, 142).
59. ETW, 174 (HTJ, 144).
60. ETW, 173174 (HTJ, 144145).

61. ETW, 75 (HTJ, 158).
62. ETW, 174 (HTJ, 145).
63. Two passages in the "Positivity" essay are classic in this regard. See ETW, 133134 and 146 (HTJ, 203 and 215).
64. Hegel, *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1913), p. 138. See Harris' discussion, pp. 434477.
65. ETW, 102 (HTJ, 178).
66. HTJ, 342 (ETW, 301).
67. See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 19511963), 1:174186.
68. ETW, 139 (HTJ, 208).
69. ETW, 193 (HTJ, 252).
70. HTJ, 245246 (ETW, 185186).
71. ETW, 199 (HTJ, 256).
72. ETW, 233 (HTJ, 284).
73. ETW, 233234 (HTJ, 284).
74. ETW, 235 (HTJ, 285).
75. ETW, 181 and 282283 (HTJ, 151 and 325326).
76. ETW, 282 (HTJ, 325).
77. ETW, 81 (HTJ, 162163).
78. Ibid.
79. ETW, 80 (HTJ, 162).

80. ETW, 71 (HTJ, 155).
81. ETW, 154 (HTJ, 221222); italics his.
82. ETW, 149 (HTJ, 217).
83. ETW, 181 (HTJ, 150151).

84. Ibid.
85. ETW, 69 (HTJ, 153154).
86. Cf. ETW, 73 and 177 (HTJ, 156 and 148).
87. ETW, 76 (HTJ, 158159).
88. ETW, 77 (HTJ, 159).
89. ETW, 77 (HTJ, 159160).
90. ETW, 77 (HTJ, 160).
91. See Phen., 675679 (Phän., 470472).
92. ETW, 301 (HTJ, 324).
93. ETW, 285 (HTJ, 328).
94. Ibid.
95. ETW, 236 (HTJ, 286).
96. ETW, 236237 (HTJ, 286287).
97. ETW, 285286 (HTJ, 328329). In an earlier draft Hegel had noted, "to every dreamer who dreams for himself alone, death is welcome: but the man who dreams for the fulfillment of a great plan can feel nothing but grief in leaving the stage on which his plan was to have been worked out. Jesus died in the confidence that his plan would not miscarry" (ETW, 289, n. [HTJ, 331]).
98. ETW, 233 (HTJ, 283).
99. ETW, 281282 (HTJ, 325).
100. ETW, 283 (HTJ, 326327).

101. ETW, 286 (HTJ, 329); my italics.
102. ETW, 265 (HTJ, 312).
103. ETW, 301 (HTJ, 342).
104. ETW, 289 (HTJ, 332).
105. ETW, 247 (HTJ, 296).
106. ETW, 241 (HTJ, 291).
107. ETW, 312 (HTJ, 348).
108. *Ibid.*
109. ETW, 311312 (HTJ, 347).
110. ETW, 313 (HTJ, 348); my italics.
111. ETW, 289290 (Nohl, 332); italics his.
112. *Ibid.*; italics his.
113. ETW, 289, n. (HTJ, 331).
114. HTJ, 321 (ETW, 278).
115. *Ibid.*
116. ETW, 291 (HTJ, 333334).
117. *Ibid.*
118. ETW, 292 (HTJ, 334).
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Ibid.*
121. ETW, 292 (HTJ, 335).

122. ETW, 292 (HTJ, 334).
123. ETW,, 292293 (HTJ, 335).
124. HTJ, 334 (ETW, 292293).
125. Ibid.

126. ETW,, 293 HTJ, 335).

127. Ibid.

128. ETW, 293294 (HTJ, 335).

129. ETW, 294 (HTJ, 336).

130. ETW, 295 (HTJ, 336).

131. HTJ, 342 (ETW, 301).

132. ETW, 313 (HTJ, 348).

133. See Hutchison Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1898).

134. ETW, 312 (HTJ, 348).

135. *Hegel's Development*, p. 391; italics his.

136. *Briefe*, 1:5960.

137. *Schriften zur Politik*, p. 138.

138. *Briefe*, 1:60.

139. HTJ, 20.

140. LPR, 2:345 (VPR, 12:207).

Chapter Two

Christology and Religion: The Religious Context of Christological Interpretation

1. VPR, 11:5 (LPR, 1:3).

2. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the*

"*Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*" (1830), trans. William Wallace, together with the *Zusätze* in Boumann's text (1845) trans. A. V. Miller, with a Foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 296. For the German text of this quotation, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*: *Jubiläumsausgabe in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Hermann Glockner, 20 vols. (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 19271930), vols. 810: *System der Philosophie*, 10:450451. Further references to this entire German edition will be abbreviated *Sämtliche Werke*. In addition, later references to the English edition of the tenth German volume will be abbreviated as HPM and references to the German text as Enzy., 10.

3. From this point on my concern will be to explore the christological implications of Hegel's philosophical thought as it was systematically developed in his published materials and university lectures after the writing of the *Jugendschriften* and the Jena period. That is to say, we shall concentrate on the mature system of philosophy which emerged with and after the *Phenomenology* from 1807 to 1831, the latter year being the date of his death in Berlin. Biographical details, in contrast with the preceding analysis of the *Jugendschriften*, will be largely irrelevant to our analysis, for Hegel believed that truth "can only be set forth fully in the form of science, in the form of system" (Phen., 85 [Phän., 23]). The system itself, then, as a unified speculative enterprise, and as it is related to christological considerations, will be my focus in the following chapters. For Hegel, his system rose or fell on its own merits as a systematically rational enterprise and no criteria save the immanent criteria of *rational con-*

sciousness itself were adequate for discussing the truth of *any* philosophical system, including his own. See Phen., 140141 (Phän., 7071).

4. *Hegel's Development*, p. 324.

5. I have left out of my account of Hegel's general theory of religion his discussion of "feeling" (*Gefühl*) as one of the forms or modes of religious consciousness. This is not because feeling is of no importance in Hegel's general theory of religion. It is indeed important and he spends considerable time discussing it (e.g., LPR, 1:118138 [VPR, 11:115137]). The reason for the omission is the nature of Hegel's own treatment of feeling as having to do more with "certainty" in religion than with "truth," more with religion *subjectively* (or psychologically) considered than *objectively* (or rationally) considered (see LPR, 1:115 [VPR, 11:112]).

Hegel has worked through to a more carefully defined understanding of "religious feeling" since the *Jugendschriften*, and the impetus for this clarification was no doubt due in large part to his concern to distinguish his own views from those of Jacobi and Schleiermacher. Feeling as a general mode of consciousness is the subjectively certain manner in which we experience the awareness of our immediate relation to any object present-to-consciousness (LPR, 1:116 [VPR, 11:113]). This is so, to use my own examples here, whether that "object" be in origin weirdly hallucinatory (e.g., a three-headed, elephant-sized butterfly), rationally conceptual (e.g., the concept of *Recht* or the Idea of God), or perceptually real (e.g., a mountain towering against the horizon). But my subjective certainty that the content is an "other" which determines my consciousness does *not* in the

mode of feeling *qua feeling* discriminate between the "is-ness" of a content which is in origin *merely* [blob] subjective (a three-headed butterfly) or *truly* [wirklich] objective (*Recht*, God, or a mountain).

The issue is thus the question of the *truth* of feeling. That is to say, the "content" to which my subjective feeling bears witness "with certainty" must be able to be shown "objectively real" in the sense that it not only *is for me* (i.e., psychologically or imaginatively real), not only exists in the content of *my* consciousness, but also that it *is for itself* (i.e., rationally or ontologically real), apart from my merely subjective experience of it (see LPR, 1:130131 [VPR, 11:126127]). In religious feeling God as an object of consciousness *exists for me, as my God, as immediately related to me*, as a content which is *certaininseparable* from and determinative of my own individual consciousness. This is the positive side of religious feeling. It is my subjective certainty of God's immediate relation to me and it is called "faith" (see LPR, 1:115118 [VPR, 11:112115]). But Hegel warns, "God, when he exists in feeling [only], has no advantage over the most despicable content; on the contrary, the kingliest flower springs from the same soil side by side with the rankest weed" (VPR, 11:126 [LPR, 1:130]), i.e., imaginative distortions of all sorts which have no extra-subjective "truth" to them.

Hegel the philosopher was now convinced that *Vernunft* could penetrate to the "objective" truth of religious consciousness as present to feeling i.e., God as a reality knowable in rationally discursive terms, knowable *truly* in his "objective" nature. He was fighting, one might say, to keep religion and theology, or the "object" of religion and theology, from being reduced to anthropology, or to

purely psychological categories. This is what he understood, or perhaps, misunderstood, to be the outcome of Schleiermacher's approach to the understanding of religion. See, for example, the derogatory dismissal of Schleiermacher in his statement that "If a man's religion were founded merely on feeling," i.e., the "feeling of his dependence," then "the dog would be the best Christian" (Bln. Schrift., p. 74). Authentic religion, he insists, *lives* in the certainty of feeling, but it is not produced by it (LPR, 1:132 [VPR, 11:128]). Religion for Hegel, as a fundamental mode of human awareness of the Infinite, originates in the necessary dialectical movement of the *rational* consciousness, whereas Schleiermacher spoke of the seat of religion as pre-reflective or trans-rational awareness of the Infinite "beyond" which "grounds" all knowing and doing.

For a further discussion of the differences between the religious and philosophical views of Hegel and Schleiermacher, see Hermann Glockner's very helpful article, "Hegel und Schleiermacher im Kampf um Religionsphilosophie und Glaubenslehre," *Hegel-Studien* (Bonn: H. Bouvier und Co., 1965), 2:246271.

6. VPR, 11:7 (LPR, 1:5).
7. LPR, 1:4 (VPR, 11:6).
8. LPR, 3:229 (VPR, 12:428).
9. VPR, 11:67 (LPR, 1:56).
10. LPR, 1:54 (VPR, 11:55).
11. Hegel's position, I am suggesting, represents that "ontological"

type of philosophy of religion which, as Tillich notes, is peculiarly Augustinian. See Tillich, "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," in *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 1029. Augustine himself acknowledged that it was the Neo-Platonists who provided him the most adequate philosophical context within which the Christian doctrine of God could be explicated. "These, by knowing God, have found where resides the cause by which the universe has been constituted, and the light by which truth is to be discovered, and the fountain at which felicity is to be drunk" (*City of God*, VIII, x).

12. LPR, 1:19 (VPR, 11:21).
13. VPR, 11:162 (LPR, 1:167).
14. VPR, 12:507 (LPR, 3:317).
15. LPR, 1:325 (VPR, 11:315316).
16. VPR, 12:488 (LPR, 3:295).
17. VPR, 12:72 (LPR, 2:198199).
18. See, for example, Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. and with a Preface by J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 355. For the German text of this reference, see *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 11: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, mit einem Vorwort von Eduard Gans und Karl Hegel, 3rd ed., p. 452. Hereafter references to the English edition will be abbreviated as LPH and references to the German text as VPG.
19. Phen., 349350 (Phän., 236237); italics his.
20. Enzy., 10:450451 (HPM, 296). The conviction of the *Volkserzieher* about what constituted an authentic *Volksreligion*

remains intact here from the 1793 Tübingen essay, the third canon of which is, "It must be so constituted that all

the needs of life the public affairs of the State are tied in with it" (HTJ, 20). The *actuality* of a state is what its religious *Geist* permits and requires.

21. Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. from the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* by William Wallace, 2nd rev. and aug. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 5. For the German text of this reference, see *Sämtliche Werke*, vol 8: *System der Philosophie*, p. 43. Later references to the English edition of the eighth German volume will be abbreviated as LL (Lesser Logic) and references to the German text as Enzy., 8.
22. VPR, 11:161 (LPR, 1:166).
23. VPR, 11:103 (LPR, 1:106).
24. VPR, 12:428 (LPR, 3:229).
25. LPH, 93 (VPG, 138).
26. LL, 183 (Enzy., 8:232).
27. Cf. LPR, 1:173174 (VPR, 11:169170), and LL, 116 (Enzy., 8:159).
28. LL, 17 (Enzy., 8:54). See also LL, 84; LPR, 1:59; LHP, 3:428.
29. LL, 43 (Enzy., 8:80).
30. See Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Paul Carus (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1947), p. 142, and *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. K. Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 297307; 422430.
31. LL, 111 (Enzy., 8:154).

32. See Merold Westphal's "The Unity of Reason in Hegel's *Phänomenologie*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1967), in which he argues that Hegel never *really* refuted or outflanked Kant's arguments about the nature and limits of human reason. Instead, he says, Hegel simply chose a different starting point and left critical problems raised by Kant unanswered. Thus Westphal states, "Hegel replies to Kant by expounding a systematic alternative to Kantian *conclusions*, but he does not refute Kant in any stronger sense than this, since he avoids contact with Kantian *premises*" (p. 214); italics his).

I think it open to serious question, however, that it is correct to argue, as Westphal then does, that "in order to eliminate all obstacles to *theoria*," Hegel in contradistinction to Kant, "is forced to develop his philosophy in terms of a dialectic in which the non-theoretical elements of ethics and religion are suppressed" (p. 211). He goes on to say that Kant's two crucial "starting points," i.e., "the awareness of passivity in cognition and the awareness of unconditioned obligation in action" are either "ignored" or "suppressed" by Hegel (p. 214).

Now even if it be true that Hegel may not have adequately addressed himself to the philosophical problems raised by Kant on the issues of reason, religion and ethics (a position which is eminently debatable, I think), it seems to me a quite ill-formulated conclusion to say he "ignored" or "suppressed" them. If one philosopher refuses to grant the "starting points" of another the status of absolute priority, what else is appropriate but to "expound a systematic alternative" in which what one considers more suitable premises are advanced? As Whitehead has emphasized, first principles are always argued *from* and not ultimately *for*.

Certainly one can, as Hegel did in relation to Kant, particularly in the opening pages of the *Encyclopaedia*, try to indicate what he thinks are the logical in-

consistencies, systematic deficiencies or experiential inadequacies of another's position, but Hegel knew very well that because of the inevitability of the hermeneutic circle in developing a philosophical system, nothing less than the presentation of a thorough-going systematic alternative could be considered to provide an effective argument against the premises of another philosopher's position. Surely Hegel is not the only one to note the serious problems in the unresolved dualisms with which Kant's understanding of theoretical and practical reason leaves us!

Hence to say Hegel "ignored" Kant's premises is not *textually* accurate, for he discusses Kant's position extensively in many of his works, but with special care in the *Phenomenology*, *Logic* and *Encyclopaedia*. Furthermore, to say Hegel "suppressed" Kantian premises cannot be correct in any stronger sense than that he refused to grant them the unquestionable and absolute priority as philosophical starting points which Kant gave them.

33. LL, 94 and 287 (Enzy., 8:134 and 353).
34. LL, 178 (Enzy., 8:227).
35. LL, 88 (Enzy., 8:129).
36. LL, 46 (Enzy., 8:84).
37. Enzy., 8:48 (LL, 10). See also Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M., Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 10. For the German text of this latter reference, see *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7: *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*,

pp. 33. Hereafter references to the English edition will be abbreviated as PR and references to the German text as Recht.

38. LL, 9394 (Enzy., 8:135); italics his.

39. Ibid.

40. LPR, 1:33 (VPR, 11:34).

41. LL, 254 (Enzy., 8:315).

42. LHP, 1:xiii (VGP, 13:56).

43. LPR, 1:100 (VPR, 11:9798).

44. VPR, 6364 (LPR, 1:6364); italics his.

45. Here, once again, one should not miss the direct connection of this *Erhebung* conception of religious consciousness with the emphasis of the later *Jugendschriften* essays, especially the fragment on "Love" and the so-called "Fragment of a System."

46. LPR, 1:56 (VPR, 11:67)

47. Hegel is quite clear that to try to ground the universal "necessity" of religion by empirical investigations *alone* will founder on the kinds of "exceptions" we have just mentioned. His general theory of religion proceeds from the "inner necessity" of reflective consciousness which we are attempting to describe in this whole first section. See LPR, 1:101105 (VPR, 11:98102).

48. VPR, 11:275 (LPR, 1:282283).

49. See LPR, 1:119120 (VPR, 11:115116).

50. LL, 103 (Enzy., 8:75); italics his.

51. LPR, 3:317 (VPR, 12:507).

52. VPR, 11:200 (LPR, 1:205206).
53. VPR, 11:34 (LPR, 1:33); italics his.

54. VPR, 11:194 (LPR, 1:200).

55. This insistence on the actual, immanent ontological *relation* between God and man, God and the world, the finite and the infinite, is what leads to Hegel's famous remark, "Without the world God is not God" (LPR, 1:200 [VPR, 11:194]), as well as to his approval of Meister Eckhardt's statement, "The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see him; my eye and his eye is one [eye]" (VPR, 11:212 [LPR, 1:219]).

But as it will be noted later, the principle of ontological identity or, better, unity, is thoroughly dialectical. It is an identity *in difference*. Negative difference is as important to the relation as is positive identity. Thus Hegel can insist with equal force that "I and God are different from one another; if both were one, there would then be immediate relation, . . . relationless unity, that is to say, without differentiation. Because the two are different, one is not what the other is; if, however, they are related, if they have identity at the same time with their difference, then this identity is itself different from their difference; it is something different from both of these, because otherwise they would not be different" (LPR, 1:166167 [VPR, 11:162]). In this last quotation written during his later Berlin years, Hegel is setting forth the fundamental dialectical principle of reality which in the *Jugendschriften* fragment on "Love" is simply stated as the process of "unity, separation and reunification" (HTJ, 381 [ETW, 308]). This ontological principle which he in the early writings described by the terms "Love" and "Life," he later expressed by the term "Spirit," or "Spirit as Subject" (see Phen., 80 [Phän., 19]). The epistemological *Erhebung* he found to characterize

conscious reflection in the "rise" from the finite to the infinite is the fundamental paradigm or analogy by which the dialectical metaphysical principle of reality itself is to be understood. The two are mutually reinforcing.

The emphasis on the identity or unity of God and man, therefore, is balanced by his insistence on a *real* difference as well, but the difference is not *outside* the relation of identity, but *within* it. God as living Spirit "overreaches" (*übergreifen*) the unity and difference as the final unity which encompasses both. That is why Hegel wants to insist that religion is not *merely* an activity of man, but also, and ultimately, the activity of God *in man* which produces the awareness of reconciliation, i.e., the *unity* of God and man in difference.

For an excellent analysis and critique of reductively "immanentist" interpretations of Hegel's position on the relation of the finite and infinite (e.g., Gregoire, Coreth, Copleston, Kojève, Findlay and Kaufmann), see Anselm K. Min, "Hegel's Absolute: Transcendent or Immanent?" *Journal of Religion* 56 (January 1976): 6187.

56. VPR, 11:194 (LPR, 1:200).

57. LPR, 3:192 (VPR, 12:395396).

58. We have not yet done sufficient justice to the "realist" motif in Hegel's concept of the *Erhebung* of reflective consciousness as confronted by a finite world. That is to say, Hegel argues that it is not *just* our subjective thinking consciousness which "rises" to the necessity of the infinite; it is also the nature of things, objects, *themselves* to "move" dialectically beyond themselves as presentationally finite "back" toward their own infinite ground. They are finite *mani-*

festations [Erscheinungen] of the infinite and in knowing them truly we are led by *them* toward their own infinite ground as that of which they are only "moments" as presentationally immediate.

Therefore it is not our reflection and consideration, our judgment which tells us that the finite with which we begin is founded on something true; it is not *we* who bring forth its ground, but the finite shows in itself that it loses itself in something other, something higher than itself. We follow the object as it returns of itself to the source of this truth (LPR, 1:107 [VPR, 11:104]; italics his).

Thus there is a sense in which Hegel could say thought conforms to objects, as well as vice versa. Yet while this is the "truth" of objects, only human beings "know" this is the case. And they "know" this because the divine or infinite Spirit produces this reflective consciousness in *them*, not in nature. In this sense, reflective reason *first* knows the truth of divine reason in its own reason, and then *re*-recognizes this truth in the objects of nature. The point we want to make here, however, is simply that *Erhebung* is a truth not simply of subjective reflective consciousness, but also of the world-in-itself as objective. And it is also ultimately the characteristic of God's own nature as he "others" the world in its finitude and yet reconciles it to himself by "overreaching" [übergreifen] it, by "sublating" [aufheben] it in his teleological activity. See, for example, LPR, 2:222 and 335 (VPR, 12:9394 and 198).

59. Augustine's doctrine of universal divine illumination is expressed *in nuce* as follows: "In our soul there is something called the intellect. This part of our soul which is called intellect is

enlightened by a higher light. Now that higher light whereby the human mind is enlightened is God" (*Johann. Tractate*, XV, iv, 9).

60. The most helpful discussion of Hegel's concept of *Vorstellung* which I have thus far found is Malcolm Clark's *Logic and System: A Study of the Transition from "Vorstellung" to Thought in the Philosophy of Hegel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971). Clark's central concern is the knotty issue of the systematic relation of logic and language, thought and experience, the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology*. It is the problem of understanding the movement of the "descent" of thinking to "existence" [Dasein] in the form of *Vorstellung* and the "return out of *Vorstellung* and out of *Anderssein*" to a self-consciousness no longer finite (see Clark, pp. 160161, Phän., p. 533, Phen., 765). For Clark's basic thesis and criticisms, see pp. XII, 69, 75, 119, 126, 135, 144145, 157, 161, 163, 164, 189, 209.

The significant thing about Clark's work for us is that he seeks to elucidate and criticize the concept of *Vorstellung* in terms of Hegel's "illustration" of its meaning in the LPR. I am much indebted to his helpful analysis and suggestions throughout this section.

61. I suggest these as correlative, not separated "necessities." By "existential" necessity here I mean simply that necessity having to do with the fact of human existence as physically dependent, finitely particular and sensuously influenced. Thinking for every individual begins with and is occasioned by the immediacy of sensuous perception, but, according to Hegel, it progressively rises above this

sensuous dependence and influence by discovering in the self-originating rational mediation of all such sensuous immediacy the power, freedom and infinite ground of human reason as such (see LPR, 1:282283 [VPR, 11:275]). *Vorstellung* understood as a psychological activity is described as the "middle" stage in this self-mediated rise and, as such, is a peculiar "mixture" of both sensuous and rational elements. Thus, by "psychological" necessity I mean that necessity by which man's thinking self-consciousness passes through various stages or "modes" of mental activity, moved by his own interest and will, in order to clarify the meaning of his own thoughts (see HPM, 179 [Enzy., 10:294]). Hegel's "psychology," therefore, is a "rational psychology," the psychology or "logic" of reflection *per se*.

62. VGP, 13:86 (LHP, 1:70).

63. VGP, 13:97 (LHP, 1:81).

64. *Logic and System*, p. 26. By referring to "its exact sense" and "its place in the dialectic of Subjective Spirit," he means Hegel's discussion in the *Encyclopaedia*, Paragraphs 451464. Actually, the "placing" of *Vorstellung* needs the even broader setting of the entire third section of the *Encyclopaedia*, i.e., "Geist," which moves from subjective spirit, to objective spirit to Absolute Spirit. A very "pressed down" larger placing of his psychology of reflection, in which the "exact sense" of *Vorstellung* is set forth, can be described in the following manner.

From the *theoretical* side (see HPM, 188 [Enzy., 10:307]), the psychology of reflection is a description of mental activity from within the process of a reflecting finite ego who self-consciously

struggles to overcome the inward sense of opposition between subject and object in the quest for the meaning, signification and verification of its own thoughts. It is the struggle to attain the freedom of *pure* thought, the struggle to produce the "true," "actual," "rational" or "objective" meaning of an object, as distinct from a "meaning" which never transcends immediate, "external" sensuous designations, or which is merely "subjectively" produced by our private imaginative caprice. It is the struggle to escape both naïvete and arbitrariness in meaning what Hegel calls mere *Meinung*. It is the struggle to move from mere subjectivity to true objectivity in thinking. This is why Hegel subsumes the psychology of *Geist* under his more general treatment of "des subjectiven Geist." *Vorstellung* is the "middle" stage or mode of consciousness between *Anschauung* and *Denken* in the description of the "psychology" of "theoretical spirit." It mixes characteristics of both. Existentially speaking, it is in "bondage" to the sensuous, but is driven by a "passion for the rational." Psychologically speaking, it is a genetic phase "above" the former, but "below" the latter.

From the *practical* side, Hegel's psychology of reflection is a description of the activity whereby the self-determining power of *thinking* is expressed in the act of *choice* (see HPM, 228 [Enzy., 10:307]). The former is "subjective spirit" in the form of "intelligence" and the latter in the form of "will." The truth of "subjective spirit" disclosed in the psychology of reflection is that man is free to think and *act* in the world. Yet Hegel makes clear that these two forms of subjective spirit which in actual existence interpenetrate because the freedom of

thinking is itself an act of purposive will, and an act of will is itself an expression of the freedom of purposive thinking remain "subjective" and finite only, in the sense that both start and thus end with a consciousness of the "apparent separateness" of the knowing and acting subject and the known-and-acted-in world (HPM, 186 [Enzy., 10:304]).

Though our interest in *Vorstellung* centers in the functions of "theoretical" spirit, it must be kept in mind that "theoretical," "practical" and "free" spirit (this latter is said to express the synthesis of the first two) lead directly to *objektivem Geist*, the manifestations of law, morality and social ethics. Further, we must keep in mind that what Hegel calls "Absolute Spirit" is the truth of the unity of the subjective and objective spirit. When thinking consciousness matures and liberates itself in the awareness that Absolute Spirit is the ground and productive energy of the subjective reason of individual men and of the objective reason of nature, history and culture, it then arrives at the *Begriff* of Spirit as the ultimate reality which overreaches both. Hence, Hegel says, the subjective and objective spirit are to be looked upon as the "road" [Weg] by which the *Begriff* of Spirit "develops *itself*" [sich ausbildet] in our consciousness. The forms of existence by which the *Begriff* of Absolute Spirit develops *itself* in the history of culture, and, correlative, by which *man* develops it in historical consciousness, are art, religion and philosophy (HPM, 292 and 302 [Enzy., 10:416 and 458]).

65. See, e.g., LPR, 1:141155 (VPR, 11:13750).

66. *Logic and System*, p. 26.

67. Hegel's *Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, 2 vols., (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1929), 1:27. Hereafter references to this English edition of Hegel's *Logik* will be abbreviated as GL (Greater Logic). The German text is to be found in *Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 45: *Wissenschaft der Logik*, 4th ed. References to this German text will be abbreviated WL, vols. 4 or 5.
68. Baillie vacillates maddeningly by using almost *all* the terms suggested by Johnston and Struthers, usually giving no hint that they are the varying translation of one original German word (see. e.g., the text of Phen., 686694). Kaufmann suggests "notion" (*Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, p. 145); Spiers and Sanderson in the LPR suggest simply (and *too* consistently!) "idea" (1:142). Findlay suggests "picture thinking" (*The Philosophy of Hegel* [New York: Collier Books, 1966], p. 380), Fackenheim suggests "representation" (p. 154), and Clark generally refuses to render the term in English, preferring to leave it untranslated (pp. 2627).
69. It is true, as Clark and others remind us, that Hegel *sometimes* uses the term *Vorstellung* to refer to a "faculty" of thinking cognition. However, though Hegel says he is willing to concede to popular views that *Vorstellung* may in some sense be called a "faculty," he stresses it is not to be thought of as some "independent" faculty apart from, say, what is also popularly called "memory" or "imagination." *Vorstellung* is a stage or mode of *intelligence* and a truly "philosophical grasp" of its place in Subjective Spirit cannot "isolate" it from those other forms of consciousness wherein theoretical intelligence is also active. (See

HPM, 202 [Enzy., 10:329]). The primary emphasis in Hegel's discussion of *Vorstellung*, therefore, falls on the term as designating an *activity* of thought and the *products* present to consciousness as a result of that activity. Our discussion will concentrate on these two most fundamental significations of the term.

70. Jean Hyppolite, among many others, sees the issue specifically posed in the question of the relationship between the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*, or, as he puts it between "anthropology and ontology" (*Logique et Existence* [Paris, 1953], p. 247). Furthermore, this issue, depending on how Hegel is interpreted, is what distinguishes "right-wing" from "left-wing" schools of Hegelian followers. See Fackenheim, pp. 7584.

71. Enzy., 8:74 (LL, 38).

72. Hegel, *Berliner Schriften, 18181831*, hrsg. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956), p. 318; italics his. Hereafter references to this work will be abbreviated as Bln. Schrift. This comment occurs in his review of C. F. Göschel's book, *Aphorismen über Nichtwissen und absolutes Wissen*, written in 1829, just two years before Hegel's death. On this issue of the double movement between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, see also LPR, 1:2425 (VPR, 11:26) and Clark, pp. 2426.

73. Phen., 8586 (Phän., 24).

74. VGP, 13:85 (LHP, 1:70).

75. Enzy., 8:145 (LL, 103); italics his.

76. Ibid.

77. HPM, 12 (Enzy., 10:2526); italics his.
78. It is this temporal consideration of the dependence of thought on experience which links Hegel's formal or "abstract" phenomenological description of reflective consciousness as religious with his understanding of the progressive and concrete development of the *Begriff* of religion itself in man's various historical religious traditions. Hence he can say "Everything must come to us in an outward way [auf äußerliche Weise] . . . Everything spiritual really comes thus to us, as the spiritually finite, as the spiritually historical" (VPR, 12:199 [LPR, 2:336]). Furthermore, the implicitly rational content of the witness to the Infinite in these religious traditions "expresses earlier in time than (philosophical) science what Spirit is" (Phen., 801 [Phän., 559]). Though the Truth about Spirit cannot remain in the form of sensuously dependent religious *Vorstellung*, "the Truth must undoubtedly in the first place come to men from without as a present object, sensuously represented [vorgestellt], just as Moses saw God in the burning bush, and as the Greek brought the god into conscious being by means of sculpture or other representations [Vorstellungen]" (VGP, 13:87 [LHP, 1:72]). More about this dependence will be discussed later in the chapter.
79. LPR, 1:262 (VPR, 11:256).
80. HPM, 212 (Enzy., 10:243).
81. Phen., 763 (Phän., 531).
82. LL, xxi (Enzy., 8:17).
83. This is obviously a very "pressed down" summary of the tortuous development of the *Phenomenology*! I intend only to point out *very* generally the movement and goal of that work as it relates to the discussion herenotthing more.

84. LL, 93 (Enzy., 8:135).
85. Enzy., 8:8687 (LL, 4849).
86. Enzy., 8:74 (LL, 38).
87. Bln. Schrift., 31; my italics.
88. LL, xxi (Enzy., 8:17).
89. Bln. Schrift., 1920.
90. This is Kaufmann's excellent translation which is found in *Hegel: Texts and Commentary*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 4042. The German text is located in Phän., 2526. Cf. Baillie's translation, Phen., pp. 8788.
91. VGP, 13:85 (LHP, 1:6970).
92. Cf. HPM, 203 (Enzy., 10:331).
93. George L. Kline has helpfully noted the meaning of Hegel's terms "abstract" and "concrete" in relation to the modern empiricists' usage as follows:

For Hegel, "concrete" means "many-sided, adequately related, complexly mediated" (we may call this "concrete [H]") while "abstract" means "on-sided, inadequately related, relatively unmediated" (abstract [H]). A concept or universal can quite sensibly be characterized as concrete [H], and at the same time, without paradox, as *abstract* [E] [the empiricist sense]. Sense particulars, or "sensuous immediacy," will necessarily be abstract [H] and at the same time, unparadoxically, concrete [E] ("Some Recent Reinterpretations of Hegel's Philosophy," *The Monist* 48 [January 1964]: 41).

Thus, also, Clark suggests that "abstract" and "concrete" have the meaning of a form of thinking which is "lifeless" and "living" in relation to an object. The one is thinking in the mode of *Verstand*, and the other in the mode of *Vernunft* (*Logic and System*, pp. 29, 37).

94. Enzy., 8:7374 (LL, 3738).

95. Enzy., 10:329 (HPM, 202).

96. Hegel's positive and negative assessment of *Verstand* as over against *Vernunft* is perhaps nowhere more clearly stated than in the *Zusatz* of Paragraph 467 in the *Encyclopaedia* where he is arguing against Kant. He insists that

. . . the following distinction must be firmly established between Understanding and Reason: that for the latter, the object is determined in and for itself, is the identity of form and content, or universal and particular, whereas for the former it falls apart into form and content, into universal and particular, and into an empty "in-itself" to which the determinateness is added from outside: that, therefore, in the thinking of the Understanding, the content is indifferent to its form, while in the comprehensive thinking of Reason the content produces its form from itself.

But though Understanding has this inherent defect just indicated it is none the less a necessary moment of rational thinking. Its activity consists, in general, in making abstraction. When it separates the contingent from the essential it is quite in its right and appears as what in truth it ought to be. Therefore, one who pursues a substantial aim is called a man of understanding. Without understanding no firm character is possible, for this requires a man to hold to his individual, essential nature. But also, conversely, Understanding can give to a one-sided determination the form of universality and thereby become the opposite of sound

common sense, which is endowed with a sense for what is essential. (HPM, 226 [Enzy., 10:362]).

97. The slippage whereby such deficient cognition is sometimes characterized by Hegel as a deficiency of *Vorstellung* and sometimes as that of *Verstand* is helpfully clarified by G. R. G. Mure. He notes that though Hegel does use *Vorstellung* in the more narrow sense of "imaginative representation" as a specialized characteristic of inwardized reflection, he "more often uses it broadly to mean a mode and context of experience in which analysis would show a developing series of phases roughly sensing, sense-perception, memory, imagination (imagining), and thought (understanding) held together and presenting an object. It is in fact just what the ordinary man calls 'thinking'" (*The Philosophy of Hegel* [London: Oxford University Press, 1965], p. 15).

98. HPM, 226 (Enzy., 10:362).

99. Materially speaking, of course, there is a subjective deficiency in *Vorstellung*. We are seeking to clarify the formal deficiency of *Vorstellung* from the standpoint of *Verstand*, but *Vorstellung* is also "*sinnlich-verständiges*" thinking. Hence Hegel in the *Encyclopaedia* stresses that there is in *Vorstellung* yet a "prepondering subjectivity" because it "begins" with sensuous intuition and its "having-been-found material" (gefundenes Stoffe) and produces syntheses for thought of images referring to objects which while now inwardized (erinnert) in the time and space of the ego and organized by the thinking consciousness for its own purposes, *still* refers consciousness outside of itself to what has been learned by way of sense perception. Man is or has begun to be free in the reflective activity of *Vorstellung*, but is not fully so because the goal of *Denken* is to have thoughts and thoughts *only*

as its *content and object*. See HPM, 201 (Enzy., 10:328) and HPM, 224 (Enzy., 10:359).

100. Enzy., 8:7374 (LL, 3738).

101. Enzy., 10:361 (HPM, 225).

102. Enzy., 8:8687 (LL, 49).

103. Enzy., 8:86 (LL, 48).

104. VPR, 12:488 (LPR, 3:295).

105. See, e.g., LHP, 1:62 (VGP, 13:77).

106. With the exception of "God gave his only-begotten Son," there are my examples and not Hegel's. I think they do represent, however, what Hegel's position implies.

107. VPR, 11:26 (LPR, 1:24). See also the new Lasson critical edition, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Georg Lasson, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 192530), vol. 1, first half-volume; *Begriff der Religion*, p. 30. Hereafter references to the German text of this first half-volume will be abbreviated as BR.

108. LPR, 1:2425 (VPR, 11:2627) and BR, 31.

109. VPR, 12:552 (LPR, 3:366).

110. LPR, 1:25 (VPR, 11:26).

111. LPR, 3:365 (VPR, 12:551).

112. LPR, 1:25 (VPR, 11:26).

113. This, I take it, is the point behind Hegel's suggestion that even though the "commonest perceptions of man's senses," which are the representational cultic basis of pagan idol worship, are grossly inadequate for expressing "a more

definite knowledge of God," it nonetheless remains true that "every perception, and indeed every act of mind, implicitly contains the principle which, *when it is purified and developed*, rises to religion." See LL, 135 (Enzy., 8:178); my italics.

114. Clark notes the parallelism between the two-fold ontological movement of the life of Absolute Spirit and the two-sided cognitive movement of human thought in the mode of *Vorstellung* as follows: "As the life of absolute spirit is inseparably an externalization of itself into existence, so the process of human thought is an expression of itself in its *Vorstellung*, which is *eo ipso* a raising of *Vorstellung* to thought. The formulation of a true question [e.g., about "God"] in a language that it finds is a raising of the language (and of the full experience with which it stands) to the originality of thought. Each is renewed in the other" (*Logic and System*, p. 25). The phrase, "the language that it finds," I would understand to refer to the language whose referents are the data or objects organized by thinking from sensuous *Anschauung*.

115. VGP, 13:79 (LHP, 1:64).

116. Enzy., 8:198 (LL, 154).

117. See LPR, 1:156 (VPR, 11:146).

118. LHP, 1:81 (VGP, 13:97).

119. HPM, 228 (Enzy., 10:469).

120. See Bln. Schrift., 318319.

121. In stressing the importance of the "objective" truth about man's being and meaning as incarnated in the state, a truth which

stands over against merely "subjective" claims to such truth on the part of pietists who claim rights over or beyond the laws of the state, Hegel insists "the genuine truth is the prodigious transfer of the inner into the outer, the building of reason into the real world, and this," he says, "has been the task of the world during the whole course of its history" (PR, 167 [Recht, 352]).

122. Enzy., 10:450 (HPM, 296).

123. *Theology of Culture*, p. 42.

124. LPR, 1:247 (VPR, 11:241).

125. LPR, 1:69 (VPR, 11:69).

126. LPR, 1:79 (VPR, 11:79).

127. *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, pp. 154155.

128. LPR, 1:247 (VPR, 11:241).

129. BR, 235.

130. See LL, 287290 (Enzy., 8:353356).

131. LPH, 39 (VPG,, 71).

132. Recht, 349351 (PR, 165166). Hegel is careful to protect himself from a serious misunderstanding in this connection. To recognize, formally speaking, that the civil and ethical life of a state derives its authorization *ultimately* from a "divine origin" rooted in the religious consciousness of a people, is *not* to say man obeys God when he always obeys the state. "Expressed in this formal manner, the meaning of the proposition is that men are to obey the laws whatever they happen to be," i.e., happen to be by way of purportedly "rational" *content*. "In this way the acts of

governing and giving of laws are abandoned to the caprice of the governing power" (LPR, 1:248 [VPR, 11:242]). Such a view is too

"abstract" and lends itself "to tyranny and to oppression." *An sich* any state is implicitly "divine" in origin, but *für sich* it may fail as a completely adequate representation of the State in its *Begriff*.

The same point is made with regard to religion. "However erroneous a religion may be, it possesses truth, although in a mutilated phase. In every religion there is a divine presence, a divine revelation. . . . But it does not follow that because it is a religion it is therefore good. We must not fall into the lax conception that the content is of no importance, but only the form" (LPH, 195196 [VPG, 261]). Hence, "it must not be forgotten religion may take a form leading to the harshest bondage in the fetters of superstition" (PR, 165 [Recht, 349]).

133. LPR, 1:33 (VPR, 11:34).

134. PR, 233 (Recht, 83). See also PR, 35 (Recht, 82).

135. Cf., LPH, 33 (VPG, 63); PR, 217218 (Recht, 448450); and LL, 350 (Enzy., 8:420).

136. LPH, 1719 (VPG, 4446).

137. LPR, 1:76 (VPR, 11:76).

138. LPR, 1:262 (VPR, 11:256).

139. LPR, 1:67 (VPR, 11:67).

140. LPR, 1:59 (VPR, 11:59).

141. GL, 1:60 (WL, 4:46).

142. See GL, 1:6869 (WL, 4:5557).

143. LPR, 2:55 (VPR, 11:391).

144. VPR, 12:191 (LPR, 2:327).

145. LPR, 1:246 (VPR, 11:240).

146. LPR, 2:248 (VPR, 12:117118). One should not fail to recognize the Lutheran dialectic of grace and works which lies behind this formulation. Hegel, it will be remembered, claimed he was, and intended to remain, a Lutheran (LHP, 1:73 [VGP, 13:89]).

147. LPR, 1:6667 (VPR, 11:67). Formally speaking, Hegel can say on the basis of the movement of religious consciousness as expressed in cultic worship that "philosophy is itself, in fact, worship [Gottesdienst]" (LPR, 1:20 [VPR, 11:21]). In transforming the "outward" form of sensuous objects in sacrifice or sacrament into vehicles of an "inward" understanding of God in thought, these forms are "abrogated" in their immediacy and become the mediating means of our knowledge of God Himself. "Worship, commencing with the external [objective mode of consciousness], then turns against and abrogates it . . . and thus philosophy is justified through the acts and forms of worship, and only does [purely conceptually] what they do [as practical activity]" (LHP, 1 :76 [VGP, 13:92]). Reflectively speaking, of course, they differ in the mode of expressing this knowledge of God. Philosophy does so in the form of pure thought, while the religious consciousness does so in a "more or less" sensuous manner (*Ibid.*).

148. See LPT, 1:263269 (VPR, 11:257262). Natural religions include primitive religions of magic, together with Chinese, Indian and Lama religions, as "the three Oriental religions of Substance," and also Persian, Syrian and Egyptian religions: they provide the transition to the "religions of free subjectivity." These are Jewish religion, as the religion of sublimity, Greek religion, as the re-

ligion of beauty, and Roman religion, as the religion of utility and fate. Roman religion provides the transition to historic Christianity as the "absolute religion" which develops in itself three crucial stages of its own in the full realization of its essence—the primitive sectarian community, the medieval church, and finally the Protestant church of the Reformation era.

Hegel further suggests "these stages may be compared to those of the ages of man." Magic is the religion of childhood, the rest of the eastern religions constitute the stage of adolescence, Jewish, Greek and Roman religions represent manhood or adult life, and Christianity signifies the fully mature religion of old age. "Such are the determinations which follow in a logical manner from the nature of the [Begriff]" (LPR, 1:269 [VPR, 11:262]).

149. LPR, 1:25 (VPR, 11:27).

150. LPR, 1:263 (VPR, 11:257). The specific christological implications of this line of thought will be taken up in the next chapter, but it may be noted here in passing that in the Christian cult this truth about man's dialectical, dependent/independent relation to God is celebrated in the central Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which in turn "is itself the eternal repetition of the life, passion, and resurrection of Christ" (LPR, 3:132 [VPR, 12:339]). It represents sacramentally the *ontological* truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation—God "others" Himself in nature and history, "dies" to the contingencies in their immediacies, but overreaches this othering death by an act of "resurrection" power in order to accomplish His own purposes. But it also represents the *ethical* truth of the Incarnation. God has become man, and it is

understood that the ethical world produced by the rational self-consciousness of man is also and at once the immanent expression of God's own will and purposes in human history. In Christian cult, therefore, the *Vorstellungen* connected with the life of Jesus of Nazareth are "absolutely adequate" to the Idea of God as He is in Himself and in relation to the world (LPR, 3:113 [VPR, 12:320321]).

The ethical task as understood in absolute religion, therefore, hinges on the assumption that *all* are free, and this is so because *all* share not just in principle, but in fact the divine image. This image is man's capacity to exercise his reason. It is not natural man, as exercising arbitrary and impulsive freedom, but rational man, as exercising the disciplined freedom of thought, who is the true *imago dei*. The state produced under such a consciousness develops a conception of right or justice which protects the *essential* or *rational* rights of *all* individuals, while restraining the *natural* exercise of merely arbitrary and impulsive freedom between individuals and groups of individuals. In the end, such a state is self-produced all share in its creation and maintenance and the rights of all as free men are respected. More will be said about Hegel's conception of the link between the Germanic democratic ideal of a constitutional monarchy and the Christian religion in the next section.

151. It is quite clear from this analysis that Hegel was still motivated by the central concerns of the *Jugendschriften* in these LPR lectures. The issue of the relation of public religion and the cultural life of a people, of a proper *Volksreligion* to nourish the ethical life, remains a fundamental preoccupation.

152. LPR, 1:9 (VPR, 11:1011).

153. LPR, 1:7 (VPR, 11:809).

154. PR, 171 (Recht, 358).

155. PR, 173 (Recht, 361362).

156. LPR, 1:102 (VRP, 11:100).

157. PR, 166 (Recht, 349350); my italics.

158. Ibid.

159. HPM, 282 (Enzy., 10:433).

160. PR, 285 (Recht, 370).

161. PR, 167 (Recht, 352).

162. HPM, 283 (Enzy., 10:434).

163. PR, 171 (Recht, 359). Hegel uses the words "subjective" and "subjectivity" in two senses in this context. The first sense has to do with the fact that religion is essentially a matter of *inward* experience of God whereby man rises "beyond" all merely finite or temporal consciousness, including his historical consciousness of the state, to a consciousness of the Absolute as the ground of all being, truth and value. See LPR, 1:3 (VPR, 11:5). This is the sense in which to say religion is "subjective" is to say it is essentially an inward and personal experience of the reality of God. The second sense is pejorative. Subjectivity in this sense connotes *arbitrary opinion*. Religious appeals to feeling or to "faith principles" as beyond the scope of the critical rights belonging to the *public* use of reason are understood by Hegel as merely "subjective conviction." Such subjective appeals are at bottom arbitrary.

because apart from the disciplined employment of the universally shared norm of rational principles, *anything* may be claimed as true and *nothing* may be proven. Reason alone is the objective check on all such subjective arbitrariness.

164. PR, 288 (Recht, 386).

165. See PR, 168169 (Recht, 354355).

166. Knox notes that in taking this philosophical position "Hegel falls back on his Lutheran faith in a cooperation between Protestant churches and a Protestant government. But he modifies the Lutheran doctrine of the subservience of the church to the state so far as to allow freedom of conscience to dissenting acts" (PR, Notes, 365).

167. ETW, 171 (HTJ, 143).

168. PR, 165 (Recht, 345).

169. See *Systematic Theology*, 1:8386.

170. PR, 12 (Recht, 36).

171. LPR, 1:252253 (VPR, 11:246247).

172. LPH, 355 (VPG, 452).

173. LPH, 86 (VPG, 129).

174. The full textual justification for this interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history will be set forth in the chapter immediately following.

175. This view, of course, in no way solves the issues about *exactly* how and when such mutual criticism may be seen to be needed in any concrete historical situation. The importance of the point here, however, is to show that it is wholly misleading and unfair to

suggest Hegel is the one really responsible for the barbarian
tyranny of the German state developed by the Nazi party in the
next cen-

tury. Hegel's more conventionally conservative political views *included* a strong emphasis on the *right* of a person (including Jews) to be treated as a person by the state. The right is *inalienable* for Hegel. J. N. Findlay's assessment here seems especially pertinent, even if perhaps a bit too condescending in tone.

Hegel, it would seem from this work [PR], was not really gifted with deep political and social understanding. He was profound in his appreciation of speculative puzzles, of aesthetic and religious experiences of what constitutes the higher solitude of man but he was not profound in his grasp of the political and social. . . . On the other hand, there is nothing absolutely *vile* in his political philosophy. At its worst it is small-minded and provincial, at its best it achieves the level of inspiration of an average British back-bench conservatism. The atmosphere of Hegel's state is the enclosed atmosphere of the small, stuffy waiting rooms of Prussian officials. . . . It has absolutely no affinity or connection with the colossal wickedness of Dachau or Auschwitz (*The Philosophy of Hegel*, p. 331).

176. II Cor. 5:19.

Chapter Three

Christology and Religion: The Christological Fulfillment of Religious Consciousness

1. VPR, 12:320321 (LPR, 3:113).
2. PR, 84 (Recht, 182).
3. VPG, 438 (LPH, 342).
4. LPR, 1:151 (VPR, 11:146).

5. Phen., 8586 (Phän., 24).
6. Hegel, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister und Friedhelm Nicolin (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1959), pp. 190191; see also LHP, 1:7879. Hereafter references to this German edition will be abbreviated as Einl. Gesch. Phil.
7. VPR, 11:286 (LPR, 3:76).
8. LPR, 2:345 (VPR, 12:207). Hegel goes out of his way in the LPR to excoriate those "new" theologians who have effectively abandoned the central and "weighty dogmas" of the "earlier system of church confessions." He rejects, for example, the trend to reduce the doctrine of redemption in Christ to a "merely psychological" significance (LPR, 1:38 [VPR, 11:39]), and Christ, he says, is not to be considered as merely "a teacher of the Idea" like a Socrates (LPR, 3:77 [VPR, 12:287]). See LPR, 1:3558 for more of his polemic against "current principles of the religious consciousness" which have culminated in abandoning the historic Christian claim "to know God, his nature and his essential being" as this is disclosed in Christ.
9. LPH, 325326 (VPG, 417418).
10. HPM, 2 (Enzy., 10:10); my italics.
11. VPR, 12:353 (LPR, 3:148).
12. VPR, 12:247 (LPR, 3:33); my italics.

13. LPR, 1:84 (VPR, 11:83).
14. VPR, 11:40 (LPR, 1:39).
15. LPR, 3:99 (VPR, 12:307).
16. LPR, 3:317 (VPR, 12:507).
17. VPR, 11:77 (LPR, 1:77).

18. This, of course, is the same type of methodological point made by Tillich against Barth's "No" to any kind of natural theology, "even of man's ability to ask the question of God" (*Systematic Theology*, 2:14). The universal *question* of the *possibility* of the decisive incarnational appearance of the New Being in history is for Tillich an epistemological function of an eternal and essential "God-manunity" (Ibid., 2:148). Because of this Tillich can make the ontological assertion that "the quality of his own being [as New Being] is not restricted to his being" (Ibid., 2:135). He insists therefore that "the biblical picture is not responsible for a theology which, in the name of the 'uniqueness' of Jesus as the Christ, cuts him off from everything before the year 1 and after the year 30. In this way the continuity of the divine self-manifestation through history is denied not only for the pre-Christian past but also for the Christian present and future" (Ibid.).

19. See LL, xxi (Enzy., 8:1718).
20. See, e.g., PR, 11 (Recht, 35); LL, 78 (Enzy., 8:118); LPR 3:112 (VPR 12:319).
21. PR, 165166 (Recht, 349350).
22. HPM, 303 (Enzy., 10:459).

23. Phen., 93 (Pha n *, 2930)
24. LL, 335 (Enzy., 8:404).
25. LPR, 1:20 (VPR, 11:21).
26. LPR, 1:33 (VPR, 11:34).
27. LPR, 3:69 (VPR, 12:279).
28. LPR, 3:101 (VPR, 12:309).
29. LPR, 2:335 (VPR, 12:198).
30. See, e.g., LHP, 3:2223 (VGP, 15:107).
31. LPH, 319 (VPG, 410).
32. LPR, 2:335 (VPR, 12:198).
33. LPR, 1:84 (VPR, 11:83).
34. See LHP, 3:4 (VGP, 15:88).
35. LPR, 3:79 (VPR, 12:288).
36. In more traditional theological terms, Hegel's view is that the appearance of the Christ is *expected* because *needed*. Because the Christ is *expected*, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus as the Christ is to be understood as a *fulfillment* of man's universal religious quest, and so not as a truth which requires an assent alien to man's ordinary *and* universal religious understanding. Because the appearance of the Christ is *needed*, however, when he is finally come the appearance relativizes and norms all prior *and* subsequent expressions of man's universal religious quest. This once again is essentially Tillich's position also. The "final revelation" given in Christ, he says, "could not

have occurred without having been expected, and it could not have been ex-

pected if it had not been preceded by other revelations which had become distorted. . . . The event of final revelation establishes itself as the center, aim, and origin of the revelatory events which occur in the period of preparation and in the period of reception" (*Systematic Theology*, 1:137138).

37. LPR, 3:113 (VPR, 12:320321); my italics.
38. LPR, 1:226 (VPR, 11:220).
39. LPR, 3:92 (VPR, 12:300).
40. VPR, 12:199 (LPR, 2:336).
41. *Ibid.*
42. VPR, 12:200 (LPR, 2:337); my italics.
43. VPR, 12:324325 (LPR, 3:117118).
44. VPR, 12:323 (LPR, 3:116).
45. VPR, 12:322323 (LPR, 3:115).
46. LPR, 1:146 (VPR, 11:141).
47. LPR, 1:147 (VPR, 11:142).
48. VGP, 15:100 (LHP, 3:16).
49. LPR, 2:335 (VPR, 12:198).
50. My use of the terms "paradigm" and "myth" here is indebted to several contemporary works which have helped to clarify the unique character and claims of religious language and knowledge. Most helpful by way of organizing distinctions in the employment of these terms, is Ian Barbour's *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*

(New York: Harper, 1973). A paradigm he defines as "a tradition transmitted through historical exemplars" (p. 9); hence we can say the entire event of Jesus of Nazareth interpreted in the church's tradition as the Christ is a special *revelatory* event which, according to Barbour's definition, "enables us to see what is universally present. The past provides clues for the interpretation of the present; particular points in history disclose the powers at work throughout history" (p. 134).

Similarly, the word myth is defined by Barbour as "a story which is taken to manifest some aspect of the cosmic order" and it "endorses particular ways of ordering experience and acting in daily life" (p. 20). Thus, he says that myths (1) offer ways of ordering experience"provide a worldview, a vision of the basic structure of reality"; (2) inform man about himself"expresses 'the continuity between the structures of human existence and cosmic structures' (Eliade)"; (3) express a saving power in human life"portray and convey a power to transform man's life"; (4) provide patterns for human actions"form and sanction the moral norms of a society"; (5) are enacted in rituals"embody the creative power of primordial and historical time and create anew the forms for ordering experience and action" (pp. 2021).

It is in these senses that I understand Hegel's christology as a paradigmatic and mythic interpretation of the historically concrete Christ event. That event is paradigmatically and mythically evocative for asserting the ontological grounds and ethical pattern of human courage in facing the conundrums of an alienated finite existence.

For further discussion of this approach to religious language and knowledge

see also Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 324, 161174, 347357; Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper, 1963), pp. 120, 92113; Langdon Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future* (New York: Harper, 1972), pp. 100136; and Van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 246265.

51. LPR, 1:146 (VPR, 11:141).

52. See LHP, 1:8183 (VGP, 13:9798).

53. See his discussion of why the truth of the divine Idea represented by "the history of the seed or of the sun" is not adequate. Such representations remain "*only* a symbol," whereas "man" as the being who as a self is essentially "spiritual subjectivity" is said to be "not a symbol" but a true "form" of the Idea as Spirit (LPR, 3:114115 [VPR, 12:321322]).

54. VPR, 12:318 (LPR, 3:110111); italics his.

55. LPR, 3:112 (VPR, 12:318).

56. LPR, 3:112 (VPR, 12:319).

57. Ibid.

58. *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 138.

59. LPR, 3:112 (VPR, 12:319).

60. See LPH, 330331 (VPG, 424425) and LHP, 3:1112 (VGP, 15:9596).

61. VPR, 12:320321 (LPR, 3:113); my italics.

62. LPR, 3:148 (VPR, 12:353).
63. LPR, 3:111 (VPR, 12:318).
64. *Ein. Gesch. Phil.*, 190191.
65. Enzy., 10:450451 (HPM, 296).
66. LPR, 3:79 (VPR, 12:288).
67. LPR, 3:124 (VPR, 12:330331).
68. LHP, 3:16 (VGP, 15:100).
69. VGP, 15:100 (LHP, 3:16).
70. LPR, 3:125 (VPR, 12:331).
71. LHP, 1:7374 (VGP, 13:89).
72. VGP, 15:100 (LHP, 3:16).
73. VGP, 15:102 (LHP, 3:17).
74. LHP, 3:16 (VGP, 15:100).
75. VGP, 15:100 (LHP, 3:16).
76. LPR, 1:152 (VPR, 11:147).
77. LPR, 1:153 (VPR, 11:147).
78. VPG, 417418 (LPH, 325326).
79. No one has made this so clear and done so adequate a critique of modern attempts to handle this issue as has Van Harvey. See *The Historian and the Believer*, especially Chapter 1, pp. 337.
80. There is one text in Hegel which is peculiarly puzzling. If one holds fast to his insistence that it was "necessary" for the incarnational principle of reconciliation to exist in a "concrete

individual" *before* a final speculative knowledge of God as Spirit could be attained in history by man, and that Christ's life or "history" is "absolutely adequate" to the divine Idea, thereby providing a norm not

only for the life of the church, but also for our understanding of all religious traditions in history if one holds fast to this understanding of Hegel's position, then one is surely initially unprepared for the following assertion:

Faith is by no means a bare assurance respecting mere finite things an assurance which belongs only to limited minds as e.g., the belief that such or such a person existed and said this or that . . . for although nothing of all this had been related to us, our knowledge of God would not be the less complete. In fact it is not a belief in something that is absent, past and gone, but the subjective assurance of the Eternal, of Absolute Truth, the Truth of God (LP H, 415 [VPG, 522523]).

Granting at the outset that Hegel is here in this context defending the Lutheran concept of the Eucharist where its efficacy is dependent on faith and not on the outward forms themselves, and that the stress naturally falls on the element of wholly inward appropriation, one is still startled by the statement that "our knowledge of God would not be the less complete" even if (wenn auch) one did not believe "such or such a person existed and said this or that." The only way to make sense of it is to assume it is a case of careless overstatement because in other contexts Hegel makes it quite clear that our knowledge of God as progressively revealed to man is very *much* dependent on the fact Christ as a person *did exist* and *said* quite a number of very important things relevant to faith and our knowledge of God.

81. VPR, 12:325 (LPR, 3:117118).

82. LPR, 3:119 (VPR, 12:325326). Hegel's keen perception of the

problem of miracles, as objective "grounds" for faith, is worth quoting. The last sentence shows clearly that the problem here is not simply that of the problem of "probability" in historical inquiry, but also one of the *form* of knowledge as "external."

If one so defines the content that the miracles of Christ are themselves seen as sensuous manifestations which can be historically verified just as his resurrection and ascension are so considered then so far as the sensuous is concerned it is not a question of the sensuous verification of these manifestations (the matter is not so posited as if the miracles of Christ this resurrection, ascension do not themselves have sufficient evidence as external manifestations and sensuous occurrences), but it is a question of *the relationship of the sensuous occurrences taken together, to Spirit, to the spiritual content*. The verification of the sensuous, which may have for its content whatever it chooses, and which may take place through evidence or perception, remains exposed to infinite objections because it is based upon sensuous externality which is the Other, over against Spirit, consciousness (VPR, 12:234 [LPR, 3:117]; my italics).

83. LPH, 418 (VPG, 525526).

84. LPR, 3:121 (VPR, 12:328).

85. VPR, 11:84 (LPR, 1:85).

86. On the way Hegel sees the ontological meaning and ethical significance of God known as "Love," see LPR, 3:96, 100, 107, 185, (VPR, 12:304, 308, 314, 390) and LL, 335 (Enzy., 8: 404).

87. LPH, 324 (VPG, 416); italics his.

88. LPH, 325 (VPG, 417).

89. LPR, 2:336 (VPR, 12:198).
90. LHP, 3:4 (VGP, 15:88); italics his.
91. LHP, 3:16 (VGP, 15:100). See also LPR, 3:76 (VPR, 12: 286) on the importance of this "certainty."
92. LHP, 3:6 (VGP, 15:90).
93. VGP, 15:89 (LHP, 3:5).
94. LPR, 3:92 (VPR, 12:301); my italics.
95. LPR, 3:89 (VPR, 12:297298).
96. LPR, 3:98 (VPR,, 12:307).
97. LPR, 3:99100 (VPR, 12:308).
98. VPR, 421 (LPH, 328); my italics.
99. LPR, 3:132133 (VPR, 12:338339).
100. LPR, 12:403 (LPR, 3:200).
101. LPR, 1:165 (VPR, 11:160).
102. LPR, 1:4 (VPR, 11:6).
103. LPR, 1:164 (VPR, 11:159).
104. LPR, 1:164 (VPR, 11:160); my italics.
105. LPR, 1:165 (VPR, 11:160).
106. Ibid.; my italics.
107. Hegel's position in this context is exactly that which Kierkegaard attacks in his famed *Philosophical Fragments*. For an

excellent comparison of Hegel and Kierkegaard on this and other issues, see Stephen Crites' *In the Twilight of Christendom: Hegel vs. Kierkegaard on Faith and History* (Chambersburg, Pa.: American Academy of Religion, 1972).

108. VPG, 410 (LPH, 319).

109. VGP, 3:100 (LHP, 3:16).

110. LHP, 3:13 (VGP, 15:98).

111. LPR, 1:2728 (VPR, 11:29).

112. LPR, 2:341 (VPR, 12:203).

113. VGP, 15:9798 (LHP, 3:13).

114. LHP, 3:14 (VGP, 15:98).

115. Hegel evidently means as shown predominantly in the synoptic witness, *sans* the virgin birth, miracle and resurrection stories. He elsewhere implies that John's Gospel has a much more speculative type grasp of Jesus' function as the "logos" of God. John is the most quoted of all biblical texts in Hegel, and that was true even in the *Jugendschriften*, as we saw earlier.

116. VGP, 15:98 (LHP, 3:1415).

117. LHP, 3:2 (VGP, 15:85).

118. Cf. Harnack's conviction that the "Hellenizing" of the Gospel provided "quite foreign presuppositions," among which was the idea that "knowledge. . . coincides with the essence of faith itself" (*History of Dogma*, trans. by Neil Buchanan, 4 vols. [New York: Dover Publications, 1961], 1:143). See also his remark about the uniting of Greek speculative thought about the "Logos" with the Christian religion: "An unmixed blessing it has not been" (*What is*

Christianity?, trans. by Thomas Bailey Saunders [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901] p. 220).

119. LPH, 331 (VPG, 424); italics his.
120. VGP, 15:99100 (LHP, 3:15); my italics.
121. Ibid.; my italics.
122. Cf. LPH, 344346; 411412 (VPG, 441443; 518519), and LPH, 3:57 (VGP, 15:140).
123. PR, 222 (Recht, 455456).
124. LPH, 456 (VPG, 568).
125. LPH, 84 (VPG, 127).
126. LPH, 417 (VPG, 524).
127. LPH, 415 (VPG, 522).
128. LPH, 412413 (VPG, 520).
129. LPH, 414 (VPG, 522).
130. LPH, 415416 (VPG, 523).
131. Ibid.
132. LPR, 3:134 (VPR, 12:340) and LPH, 415 (VPG, 523).
133. LPH, 416 (VPG, 523) and LPR, 1:133 (VPR, 12:339340).
134. LPH, 416 (VPG, 523524).
135. LPR, 3:133 (VPR, 12:339).
136. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. Georg Lasson, 4 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 191720), 4:880881 (cf. VPG, 523).

137. This is Crites' translation (p. 54) based on Nicolin and Pöggeler's edition of the *Enzyklopädie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969), Para. 552, p. 435. Cf. HPM, 286287 (Enzy., 10:438). For further helpful analysis of this issue, see Crites, pp. 5257.

138. PR, 12 (Recht, 36). Tillich too speaks of "the Protestant principle" as a "universally significant principle" which transcends its sixteenth century instantiation in the Reformation. The similarity in their employment of this phrase is that both use it as a concept pointing to the necessary protest against all heteronomously imposed authoritarianism in religion and culture. It contains "the divine and human protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality. . . . The Protestant principle is the judge of every religious and cultural reality, including the religion and culture which calls itself 'Protestant'" (Tillich, *The Protestant Era* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], p. 163). The difference in their employment of the phrase is that for Hegel it is a universal principle implicit *in* thinking protesting against all that is contrary to the free rational exercise *of* thinking, whereas for Tillich it is a protest intrinsic to the dialectic of "faith" which points *beyond* thinking and acting. "It is the guardian against the attempts of the finite and conditioned to usurp the place of the unconditional in thinking and acting" (*Ibid.*).

Hegel's conviction that the dialectical power of reason allows man to share the "standpoint" of the infinite is characterized by Tillich as a manifestation of *hubris*, "the self-elevation toward the realm of the divine," and this differing conception in the role and power of human reason in relation to the divine accounts for Tillich's concern to differentiate his idea of the Protestant principle from "German idealism." Whether or not one agrees with Tillich's view of the Prot-

estant principle over against Hegel here, Tillich's further characterization of Hegel's system as a form of improper *hubris* does not square with my understanding of what Hegel claimed for it. "The reason that Hegel was attacked from all sides and removed from the throne of providence on which he had placed himself was that the finished system cut off all openness to the future. Only God is on that throne and only God is able both to understand the past and to create the future" (*Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Theology* [New York: Harper, 1967], p. 118). This all-too-typical characterization of Hegel simply does not do justice to his firm insistence that his philosophy did *not* assay to predict or instruct the future course of world history. See especially LPH, 8687 (VPG, 129). In the next section below I will offer an alternative interpretation of Hegel which I think does more justice to the self-limiting character of his system in this regard.

139. LPH, 389390 (VPG, 494).

140. LPH, 52 (VPG, 86).

141. LPH, 422 (VPG, 520). Hegel, like Max Weber (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [New York: Scribner, 1958]), sees the religious principles of Protestantism as inaugurating a new conception of the "independence" of secular relations, not only in connection with economics but also in connection with the principle of free inquiry in all cultural life. Hegel implies that in some respects, at least in point of motivating impetus and explicit self-confidence, Luther's "simple doctrine" of free rational subjectivity is responsible historically for the humanistic flowering of the Enlightenment confidence in the power of investigative and

analytic reason which took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, Kant's own classic definition of "Enlightenment" is essentially a restatement of what Hegel regards as the "Protestant principle."

142. LPH, 416 (VPG, 524); my italics.

143. See HPM, 296 (Enzy., 10:450451).

144. VPG, 439 (LPH, 343); italics his.

145. LPH, 456 (VPG, 568).

146. LPH, 457 (VPG, 569). Hegel's conception of "time" is complex and this passage points to the problem by noting that truth in philosophy is essentially "contemplative" and hence beyond the "agitated surface" of historical processes. But if the truth philosophy knows *about* history is "beyond" time, and to some extent impervious not only to the merely contingent "appearances" of temporal process but also to misguided and arbitrary acts of human will, then what significance does human agency retain? Is historical time itself a mere "illusion" and our acts not *ultimately* significant for the value-creating process of history? What is the relation between the "divine" time of the Idea and finite "historical" time?

The problem ultimately backs up into the issue of the ontological relation between Spirit and spirits, God and the world, the transcendence and immanence of God as Absolute Spirit. Was Hegel an anthropocentric proto-Feuerbachian or a mystical neo-Böhmeian? Jean Hyppolite (*Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit* [Paris: Aubier, 1946], pp. 523525) says he was neither, and Clark agrees (pp. 207208). What then *was* he?!

When Findlay goes about exploring this issue as to whether Spirit in Hegel is to be understood as ultimately "transcendent" to the world or as exhaustively "immanent" in it, he, like most modern interpreters, is more anxious to put priority on "immanence" passages in Hegel than on "transcendence" passages. The latter passages are said to be plainly "metaphorical and mythic" (*The Philosophy of Hegel*, p. 44), i.e., not to be taken "straight" as allowing God an ultimately free and conscious "finalism" of purpose "outside" of or "before" finite existence. The Idea is thus "not to be interpreted as an actual self-conscious being, but rather as the mere *notion* of that spiritual self-consciousness which it is the task of the world-process to develop" (Ibid., p. 18; italics his).

Hegel *can* be read this way, but this presupposes always that any other more traditionally "theistic" reading takes too seriously his efforts at a "studied conciliation" with religion and especially Christianity (Ibid., p. 17). I am far more inclined to insist with Fackenheim that Hegel was not nearly so anxious hurriedly to "transcend" the Christian religion to get on to more important philosophical duties, as to "express" its revelatory "final" truth. "Christian faith," Fackenheim says, "makes the ultimate affirmation of a *total* and *gratuitous* divine love *for the human*: a total identification with the human, by a Divinity *which does not need it*. Hegel's Christian, then affirms two Trinities: the pre-worldly trinitarian play eternally complete apart from the world, and the real trinitarian incursion into the world, which can forever conquer death only by forever suffering it. But the bond between the two Trinities is Love." He adds in a footnote: "Here lies not only the innermost center of the comprehensive truth of

Christian existence, but also . . . the innermost secret which enables the entire Hegelian philosophy to preserve its 'middle' from fragmentation" (*The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 153; italics his; see also pp. 218219). By saying God "does not *need*" identification with man, Fackenheim means, as I read him, does not need it *except* as determined and necessitated by God's eternal nature as loving. As thus necessary, it remains nonetheless a *choice*.

This concept of God's "choice" based on the principle of an internal "spiritual" necessity rooted in an ontology of divine "love" is what leads Anselm K. Min, in support of Fackenheim, to deny that Hegel can be accused of being either a naturalistic humanist or pantheist "in the ordinary sense" ("Hegel's Absolute: Transcendent or Immanent?" *Journal of Religion* 56 [January 1976]: 80 and 87). Min therefore concludes that, "contrary to the assumptions of naïve understanding, the dichotomy of transcendence and immanence is not absolute but only relative, secondary, and derived from the more [speculative] primordial unity of God and the world . . . [which is] the primordial, *internal* unity of infinite and finite in the true (wahrhaft) infinity and true transcendence of the Absolute Spirit which is itself and yet posits and 'overreaches' its Other out of love" (Ibid., pp. 8687; my italics). The transcendent character of the pre-worldly trinity "beyond time" is the primordial ontological condition for the immanent character of the economic trinity "in time," and this, it seems to me, is eminently compatible with a Christian and theistic interpretation of Hegel's view of the Absolute as Spirit.

In spite of Findlay's too immanentist ontological reading of Hegel's concept of

Spirit, he seems nevertheless quite correct epistemologically in suggesting that when Hegel says "Time is the *Begriff* [or Idea] itself" (Phän., 612 [Phen., 800] he is *not* teaching any doctrine of the "unreality" of historical time. "Hegel certainly says that, in the final insight of philosophy, Time will be expunged or annulled, but this 'annulment' stands for no metaphysical or theological time-lessness, but for an annulment *in and for philosophy*. It means that, for the philosopher, concepts are universal and principles true, and that the precise moment at which anyone appropriates them is completely unimportant" (*The Philosophy of Hegel*, 145146). Truth for philosophy, as was shown earlier, is the truth of what *is*. On the "double character" of the concept of time in Hegel, "die Zeit als Zeit" and "die natürliche Zeit als erscheinend," see also Clark, pp. 4748.

History thento return now to our original question in this footnoteis "natural time" which in its "otherness" from "divine Time" nonetheless "mirrors" the truth of the eternal reconciling movement of the *Begriff* at work in *all* its moments. That is the final "contemplative" truth of history understood ultimately as a divine "theodicy" of love, as a divine incursion and incarnation. Hegel's doctrine of providence, as I understand him, requires a recognition both that God's "cunning" of love will not ultimately fail in luring *some* human wills to do his bidding, and also that not *all* human wills in any historical situation or epoch will in fact so respond. Whether or not this position may appear philosophically appealing to all his readers, his position seems adequately Christian in its expression. What would the Christian concept of providence *mean* if God's purposive and persuasive love were able *ultimately* to be thwarted or *never* realized?

147. VPG, 569 (LPH, 457); my italics.

148. LPH, 103 (VPG, 150).

149. LPH, 17 (VPG, 44).

150. LPH, 22 (VPG, 50).

151. LPH, 21 (VPG, 49).

152. LPH, 10 (VPG, 36).

153. LPH, 11 (VPG, 37).

154. LPH, 21 (VPG, 49).

155. The meaning of this qualification ("in principle at least") will be dealt with below. Hegelian interpreters veer sharply apart on what Hegel understood by such a "consummation."

156. See LPH, 1718 (VPG, 4445).

157. VPG, 438 (LPH, 342).

158. LPH, 335 (VPG, 429).

159. LPH, 1920 (VPG, 47); my italics.

160. To say Hegel "bites the bullet" here on the historical and ontological meaning of the concept of providence simply means that for him to believe in only a "little bit" of providence is something like being only a "little bit pregnant." Either God is Lord of history or he is not, and Hegel is disdainful of those to whom providence is *only* an *abstract* idea without *concrete* realization in all of man's historical life. He may not be correct in taking this view, but at least

he is clear about his conviction that nothing short of such a view can grant the "repose" of spirit which otherwise would find no "consolation" amidst an ultimately purposeless historical process. Cf. T. M. Knox's comments, PR, 302, n. 27.

161. VPG, 52 (LPH, 23).
162. LPH, 32 (VPG, 63).
163. LPH, 24 (VPG, 52-53).
164. LPH, 30 (VPG, 60).
165. LPH, 33 (VPG, 63).
166. LPH, 31 (VPG, 61).
167. LPH, 103 (VPG, 150).
168. LPH, 109 (VPG, 156).
169. PR, 84 (Recht, 182).

170. For two very recent analyses, see George Dennis O'Brien, *Hegel on Reason and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), and Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, *Hegel's Philosophy of History* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974). See also Jacques d'Hondt, *Hegel: Philosophie de l'histoire vivante* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), Jean Hyppolite, *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel* (Paris: M. Riviere, 1968), Reinhart Maurer, *Hegel und das Ende der Geschichte* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1965), and Franz Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, 2 vols. (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1962).

171. HPM, 296 (Enzy., 10:451).
172. LPH, 319 (VPG, 410).
173. PR, 222 (Recht, 456).
174. Einl. Gesch. Phil., 190 (CF. LHP, 1:78).
175. PR. 1213 (Recht, 3637); my italics.
176. *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 234.
177. LPR, 3:150 (VPR, 12:354355).
178. Ibid.
179. PR, 11 (Recht, 35).
180. *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 224.
181. VPR, 12:355356 (LPR, 3:151).
182. Ibid.
183. VPR, 12:356 (LPR, 3:151); my italics.
184. G. R. G. Mure has written an excellent essay on this question as to how Hegel understood the "finality" of his own philosophy even though, based on his conclusions, he would not accept my own more "mediating" view, which allows for a greater logical consistency between all his statements about the nature of this finality. Mure suggests that there really *is* a logical inconsistency between what he calls Hegel's confident "finalist" view and the more relativistic "Owl of Minerva" view to which Mure says he finally "bows." But he further suggests that such "finalist" claims as there are in Hegel's writings "would never have ensnared him had it not been for the solidity of his Lutheran faith," i.e., his faith that the Lutheran Reformation had given the

Germanic people a world-historical cultural function and destiny never to be surpassed. So, like Fackenheim, he

suggests that when that vision was shattered by the hard "facts" mentioned at the end of the LPR, Hegel's philosophical self-confidence, and the consistency of his entire argument as to why alone in his time a "final" speculative philosophy could be developed, collapsed bowed "reluctantly" to the Owl of Minerva. See Mure, "Hegel, Luther and the Owl of Minerva," *Philosophy* [London] 41 (April 1966): 127-139, but especially p. 139 from which the quotation above is taken.

Chapter Four

Christology, Theology and Philosophy: A Methodological Inquiry

1. Enzy., 8:112-113 (LL, 73).
2. VPR, 12:205 (LPR, 2:342).
3. Hegel's Foreword to H. Fr. W. Hinrich's *Die Religion im innern Verhältnisse ihres zur Wissenschaft*, as found in A. V. Miller's excellent translation in *Beyond Epistemology*, ed. Frederick G. Weiss (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 243. The entire German text of this very important essay is found in Bln. Schift., pp. 5982.
4. LPR, 3:148 (VPR, 12:353).
5. *Logic and System*, p. 26.
6. This statement was made by Tracy in a course on Systematic Theology offered at the University of Chicago Divinity School in the Fall of 1970. He shared teaching responsibilities in this course with Langdon Gilkey and Schubert Ogden.
7. See, for example, the lively discussions of these issues in two

contemporary American Catholic theologians: Leslie Dewart, *The Future of Belief* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966) and David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975). Two thinkers who represent the ways Whiteheadian-Hartshornian process metaphysical conceptualities may be employed in reinterpreting traditional theological and christological issues are Schubert Ogden, *The Reality of God* (New York: Harper, 1966) and David Griffin, *A Process Christology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973). It should be noted, however, that Ogden and Griffin differ sharply on where the use of process conceptualities is appropriate in such a modern christological reinterpretation. See Ogden's article, "The Point of Christology," *Journal of Religion* 55 (October, 1975): 375-395, especially p. 390, n. 23.

8. VGP, 13:79 (LHP, 1:64).
9. VPR, 11:212 (LPR, 1:217).
10. LPR, 2:341 (VPR, 12:204).
11. VPR, 11:162 (LPR, 1:167).
12. VPG, 138 (LPH, 93).
13. LPR, 1:106 (VPR, 11:103).
14. From a Hegelian fragment titled, "Authority and Freedom," translated by Quentin Lauer in *Hegel's Idea of Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1971), p. 149. The original German text of this fragment is found in Einl. Gesch. Phil., pp. 193-201.

15. Hegel, "Authority and Freedom," p. 155.
16. Enzy., 8:112113 (LL, 73).
17. VPR, 11:29 (LPR, 1:28).
18. LPR, 1:17 (VPR, 11:19).
19. LPR, 2:341 (VPR, 12:203).
20. Phen., 767768 (Phä., 535536).
21. LHP, 3:1011 (VGP, 15:95).
22. Hegel, Foreword, p. 228.
23. Ibid.
24. LPR, 2:341 (VPR, 13:204); my italics.
25. Hegel, Foreword, p. 229.
26. This same relativizing qualifier, which would have startled and been unintelligible to any pre-modern, pre-Enlightenment Christian theologian, is also enunciated by that stellar representative of modern theology, Schleiermacher. "Dogmatic theology is the science which systematizes the doctrine prevalent in a Christian Church at a given time" (*The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, 2 vols. [New York: Harper, Torchbooks, 1963], 1:88.) I clearly do not mean to imply, however, that the precise nature of the contents and purpose of dogmatics is conceived by them in the same way.
27. This assumption and precisely how it is construed to affect the development of a Christian dogmatic or systematic theology is

crucial to my further argument in this chapter. I am suggesting in the way I use the terms "confessional" and "apologetic" that an adequate dogmatic theology aims both at *being edifying* and *being true*, and that as such its "audience" is always presumed to be *both* the Christian community *and* the cultural "listeners" and "critics" who are outside of it. Unlike Schleiermacher, for example, and others like Barth, who would not agree to this assumption, I do not think "Dogmatics is only for Christians," i.e., only for those who "already [have] the inward certainty" that Christianity is true (Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 1: 60). This assumption would hold good only if one believed that what I will shortly define as the task of a "fundamental" or "philosophical theology" operates with *different* truth criteria in the "public" realm of discourse than does dogmatic theology in the "confessional" realm of its own community. In Schleiermacher's more narrow conception of dogmatics, of course, he recognizes the necessary function of its "logical or dialectical interest" and its dependence on philosophical "vocabulary" for the "form" of its expressions. But he is quite clear that the relationship between the two applies "only to the form." The "content" of dogmatics which takes such a philosophical form, however, is distinctively religious and not speculative, and has to do with the peculiar inward character of the "*Christian* affections," not with "purely logical or natural-scientific" considerations as they may purport to speculate about the existence and nature of a "Supreme Being." Thus while dogmatic and speculative philosophical propositions may be similar in form they are always different in kind, and so for Schleiermacher dogmatics *per se* never aim at being "apologetic," only "confessional." See *ibid.*, 1:5960, 8183, and his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox, 1966), pp. 7182.

For my part, however, I will assume that in the *broadest* and most inclusive sense of the term Christian theology is the ever-renewed systematic, conceptual and normative attempt to interpret the faith and witness of the Christian community for both confessional and apologetic purposes. As *confessional*, the theologian's task is conceptually to re-present the normative faith of that community in such a way that it is appropriate to the witness of Scripture and to the lived continuity of tradition which sustains its present life. The theologian, then, seeks to bring to explicit self-consciousness what it is that is the normative doctrinal basis of the communal unity. The need to do this, to make conceptually explicit what it is that is the normative understanding of the community's own faith and life, arises out of the internal and external demands put upon it in all the changing circumstances of its developing historical life in every era.

To be sure, the threat of "heresy" from within is part of the continuing theological demand for self-clarity and self-definition, but the desire for self-realization is equally important and equally potent. There is the deeply felt desire to realize to the full the practical application of its spiritual or religious values in everyday life. It is the desire to be "faith-full" and "faithful." Further, the community wants and needs to *teach* its young, to re-present faithfully its faith in a way which will elicit the response of individual faith from those born in the community, as well as those, of course, who enter it as adult members. The need for self-definition and self-realization thus contributes to the powerful confessional dimension in theological reflection.

The task of the theologian, however, is *apologetic* as well as confessional. Implicit in confessional self-definition is the demand to say clearly what the Christian witness of faith is *not*, and even what it *ought* not to be. To define is necessarily to separate or distinguish, and thus there is the implicit concern to get clear about the particular uniqueness of the community's faith. Hence, *insofar* as that uniqueness distinguishes it from the religious self-understanding of alternative communities of faith who advance inadequate or false religious truth claims, Christian theology is also at once apologetic. More, those who already belong to the Christian community of faith are *also* part of larger human associations made up of those who are not members of the community, and who may be inimical towards its values and teachings. Hence, the demand for normative doctrinal self-definition and practical self-realization moves naturally, and indeed inevitably, into the demand for a publicly persuasive justification of this community's religious values and life-style in terms of the larger cultural context in which it finds itself in any given era. It is in part the concern to state clearly why one is a member of *this* community of faith and not *that* one, and even more, why one is a member of any community of faith at all. It is also the attempt to justify as *true* its distinctive conception of personal and corporate self-realization for man as a religious being, i.e., as making possible a more authentic and complete mode of such self-realization than can be attained in other religious or nonreligious communities.

Theology, then, as the conceptual discipline which rises to meet these demands, becomes, in its very confessional concern for normative doctrinal self-definition and practical self-realization, apologetic. In short, what the theologian

is called upon to do is to deal conceptually and publicly with the question of the Christian community's *own* claim to religious *truth* in contrast to such claims advanced by other religious traditions, as well as in contrast to those claims to truth which are predicated on a non- or anti-religious interpretation of human existence. I believe that the witness of Scripture itself (e.g., Romans 1:12:16) vindicates the concern for and the public possibility of the kind of persuasive apologetic justification implicit in the theological task.

For these reasons, then, I feel it is methodologically important and appropriate to stress that theology is at once both confessional and apologetic in its task. When it is self-consciously confessional, it is also necessarily shaped by the desire to be apologetically persuasive for those within and outside the church; and when it is self-consciously apologetic, it is also shaped by the desire to be appropriate to its own confessional self-understanding as rooted in the witness of Scripture and the living faith of the community. What is at stake in this assumption about the dual task of an adequate theology is nothing less than the biblical claim that Christianity is the true and truest fulfillment of man's religious consciousness, and Hegel throughout his writings never failed to chide severely those theologians in his own day who wished to avoid that "scandalous" claim.

28. See e.g., LPR, 1:30 (VPR, 11 :31).

29. See Hegel, Foreword, pp. 232-240, for his full argument on this issue.

30. LPR, 1:101 (VPR, 11:98).

31. Ibid.

32. As Hegel shrewdly observes, such an agnosticism [Nichtwissen] about man's ability to *know* God, about our supposedly being able only to know *of* him,

does not permit of the establishment of a theology, of a doctrine of God, though it certainly does allow of a doctrine of religion. . . . A one-sided relation, however, is not a relation at all. If, in fact, we are to understand by religion nothing more than a relation between ourselves and God, then God is left without any independent existence. God would, on this theory, exist in religion only. He would be something posited, something produced by us (LPR, 3:191193 [VPR, 12:395396]).

Yet, Hegel realizes that another not-so-contradictory or religiously enervating reading of such a view is possible. Such a reading could insist "*God is*, and gives himself to men by coming into a relation with them." But in a very convincing manner, I think, Hegel then argues,

If this word *is* is limited to the expression of the truth that we do indeed know or recognize the *fact* that God is, but do not know *what* he is, and is thus used with a constantly recurring reflection on knowledge, then this would imply that no substantial qualities can be attributed to Him. Thus we should not have to say we know that *God is*, but could merely speak of *is*; for the word God introduces an idea [Vorstellung], and consequently a substantial element, a content with definite characteristics, and apart from these God is an empty word (LPR, 3:193 [VPR, 12:396]; italics his).

33. Hegel's Foreword to Hinrich's book mentioned above, written in 1822, is devoted to an attack on Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* which Hegel believed

to falter decisively on just this issueeven though he did not mention him or that text by name. The first edition of the *Glaubenslehre* was published by his Berlin colleague earlier in that year. In the LPR he also carries on his debate with what he considered to be a romanticist "theology of feeling" and though again Schleiermacher is not named (Jacobi, however, is), there is no doubt Hegel has him in mind (See LPR, 1:115138 [VPR, 11:112134]).

34. GL, 1:34 (WL, 4:14).
35. Hegel, Foreword, p. 228.
36. Ibid., p. 233; italics his.
37. Ibid., p. 243; italics his.
38. Ibid.; italics his.
39. Enzy., 8:112113 (LL, 73).
40. LPR, 1:4042 (VPR, 11 :4143); italics his.
41. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 1:76.
42. In the first case I obviously refer to Barth's *Dogmatics* and in the second to such works as G. E. Wright's *The God Who Acts* (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1952). For a trenchant criticism of the equivocating character of the *referential meaning* of the phrase "act of God" found in Wright and all such texts on "biblical theology," and a call for a "theological ontology that will put intelligible and credible meanings into our analogical categories of divine deeds and of divine self-manifestation through events" as recorded in Scripture, see Langdon Gilkey's excellent article, "Cosmology,

Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language," *Journal of Religion* 41 (July 1961): 194205. The quotation above is from p. 203. With a concluding flourish which would make Hegel proud, Gilkey states that "for all of us," i.e., as biblical scholars and systematic theologians, "a contemporary understanding of ancient Scriptures depends as much on a careful analysis of our present [ontological and cosmological] presuppositions as it does on being learned in the religion and faith of the past" (*Ibid.*, p. 205).

43. See Harris, pp. 9096, for a discussion of Storr's thought and its impact on Hegel. See also Otto Pfleiderer's discussion of Storr and the "old" Tübingen School in *The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant* (New York: Macmillan, 1890), pp. 8587. For an excellent and detailed discussion of the theological atmosphere and curriculum at the Tübingen *Stift* while Hegel was there, see the article by Martin Brecht and Jörg Sandberger, "Hegels Begegnung mit der Theologie im Tübinger Stift," *Hegel Studien* (Bonn: H. Bouvier and Co., 1969) 5:4881.

44. Pfleiderer, p. 86. Hegel says that the hermeneutic naïvete of such a "theology out of the Scriptures," the counterpart of that in our own day to which Gilkey refers above as "biblical theology," "results in treating the Scriptures like a nose of wax." It is naïve because

it is inherent in the very nature of any explanation which interprets that thought should have its part in it. Thought explicitly contains structured definitions [Bestimmungen], fundamental principles [Grundsätze], basic presuppositions [Voraus-setzungen], which make their influence felt in the work of interpretation. If interpretation is not mere explanation of words, but explanation of the meaning [Sinn], the

thoughts of the interpreter must be put into the foundation [of such an explanation] (VPR, 11:2930 [LPR, 1:2829]).

45. LPR, 2:342 (VPR, 12:204); last italics mine.

46. Ibid.

47. VPR, 12:205 (LPR, 2:343).

48. Ibid.

49. Hegel, Foreword, p. 243.

50. LPR, 2:342 (VPR, 12:204).

51. Hegel, "Authority and Freedom," 155.

52. Enzy., 8:113 (LL, 73).

53. David Tracy in his *Blessed Rage for Order* makes this same sort of distinction about the public and more directly apologetic "fundamental" task of theology, and its communal and more directly confessional "dogmatic" task. I am indebted to him for its cogent articulation because it has enabled me to suggest that such a distinction is at least implicitly present in Hegel's view of the tasks of theology. See pp. 32, 42 [n. 66], 56 [n. 1], 87 [n. 57], 237, and especially 250 [n. 1].

54. See e.g., HPM, 1213 (Enzy., 10:27).

55. HPM, 298 (Enzy., 10:454); my italics.

56. LPR, 1:226 (VPR, 11:220); my italics.

57. VGP, 15:242243 (LHP, 3:160161).

58. LPR, 1:19 (VPR, 11:21).

59. LPR, 1:20 (VPR, 11:2122).

60. Enzy., 8:171 8.

61. VPR, 11:22 (LPR, 1:21).

62. This concept of a "right philosophy" as needed by the biblical exegete in relation to the theological task I have taken, of course, from Rudolf Bultmann. He notes that

It is an illusion to hold that any exegesis can be independent of secular conceptions. Every interpreter is inescapably dependent on conceptions which he has inherited from a tradition, consciously or unconsciously, and every tradition is dependent on some philosophy or other. . . . It follows, then, that historical and exegetical study should not be practiced without reflection and without giving an account of the conceptions which guide the exegesis. In other words, the question of the "right" philosophy arises (*Jesus Christ and Mythology* [New York: Scribners, 1958], pp. 5455).

The two sentences I left out in this quotation, as signified by the elliptical "dots," are as bound to bring a smile to anyone reading them who realizes, of course, that Hegel clearly considered his own philosophy to be the "right" one for Christian theology, as they are bound to underscore the potential significancesome would say the potential dangerof the fact that many contemporary theologians are re-reading Hegel's philosophy in order to get just such help! The sentences read:

In this way, for example, much of the exegesis of the nineteenth century was dependent on idealistic philosophy and on its conceptions, on its understanding of human ex-

istence. Such idealistic conceptions still influence many interpreters today (*ibid.*, p. 55).

Bultmann, of course, for his part, considers Heidegger's existentialist philosophy to be the "right" one.

63. Enzy., 8:4748 (LL, 10).

64. *Ibid.*

65. LL, 44 (Enzy., 8:81).

66. *Ibid.*

67. LL, 335 (Enzy., 8:404).

68. LPR, 3:69 (VPR, 12:279).

69. LPR, 2:335 (VPR, 12:198).

70. LL, 100 (Enzy., 8:142).

71. LPH, 457 (VPG, 568).

72. Cf. PR, 3435 (Recht, 8182).

73. Cf. Phen., 9597 (Phän., 3133); GL, 1:60 (WL, 4:45); LL, 50 (Enzy., 8:87).

74. LL, 141 (Enzy., 8:184).

75. LL, 38 (Enzy., 8:74).

76. Phen., 87 (Phän., 25).

77. Cf. LL, 209210 (Enzy., 8:263265).

78. Thomas Munson helpfully summarizes Hegel's conception of

this interpretive *Aufhebung* as "a suppression of what is partial or fragmentary, a conservation of what is essential, a sublimation on a higher level of truth or reality." "Hegel as Philosopher of Religion," *Journal of Religion* 46 (January 1966):15. Italics his.

79. See LPR, 3:115 (VPR, 12:322323).

80. LPR, 1:226 (VPR, 11:220).

81. LPR, 3:92 (VPR, 12:300).

82. GL, 1:60 (WL, 4:45).

83. VPR, 12:466 (LPR, 3:270).

84. LL, 156 (Enzy., 8:201).

85. LL, 209210 (Enzy., 8:263265).

86. LPH, 457 (VPG, 568).

87. Phen., 80 (Phän., 19).

88. LL, 16 (Enzy., 8:53).

89. VPR, 11:275 (LPR, 1:282283). See Fackenheim's excellent discussion of this issue which argues the same point, pp. 75115.

90. See VPR, 1:390391 (LPR, 2:5455). Hegel states that though one may indeed speak of God as "*the Essence*" of all things (never, however, merely as "a" or even the "highest" essence), this "does not by any means exhaust the depth of the Christian *Vorstellung* of God." In addition, he insists that Enlightenment ideas of God as a "Supreme Being" reduce him to an "abstrakt jenseitiges Wesen." Such a view is left with a God who is "merely a name, a bare *caput mortuum* of the abstract understanding" (Enzy., 8:264265 [LL, 210]).

91. See, for example, Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, pp. 3645; 347349,

and Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, pp. 271275. Findlay does make the statement, "it would be wrong to regard Hegel as some sort of humanist," but then oddly proceeds to assert,

The self-conscious spirit which plays the part of God in his system is not the complex, existent person, but the impersonal, reasonable element in him, which, by a necessary process, more and more "takes over" the individual, and becomes manifest and conscious in him. Hegel's religion, like that of Aristotle, consists in "straining every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us" (*The Philosophy of Hegel*, p. 143).

But in what other terms has an intelligent and self-critical philosophical humanist ever understood his fundamental convictions?

92. "Hegel's Absolute: Transcendent or Immanent?", p. 87. Min acknowledges his debt to and approval of Fackenheim's articulation of the relation of the transcendent "pre-worldly" Trinity to its immanent "worldly" instantiation as being rooted in the "necessity" of God's love, which implies God's inner freedom of "choice" (See Fackenheim, pp. 205206). According to Hegel, Min says,

... contrary to the assumptions of naive understanding, the dichotomy of transcendence and immanence is not absolute but only relative, secondary, and derived from the more primordial unity of God and the world. God indeed "transcends" the world insofar as no particular state of the world exhausts his trinitarian spirituality. The distinction between God and the world, between his being-in-himself and his being-for-the-world, remains sufficiently objective and real to forbid any simple identification of his subjectivity with any one of his finite self-expressions or with

any one state of the world as a whole. God is also "immanent" in the world insofar as the world is itself possible only in its internal relatedness to, and as the externalization of, its infinite Other, and insofar as this infinite Other of the world is knowable at all as such only to the extent that it does so externalize itself in the world (p. 86).

For an excellent discussion of Hegel's ideas here as posing no more theological problems on this issue than St. Thomas' views, see the article mentioned earlier by Joseph Fitzer, "Hegel and the Incarnation: A Response to Hans Küng," especially pp. 245265.

For further discussion of the intentional and methodological relation between the structure of Hegel's speculative Logic and the trinitarian doctrine of God in Christianity, see Claude Bruaire, *Logique et religion chretienne dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964) and Jörg Splett, *Die Trinitätslehre G. W. F. Hegels* (Freiburg-München: Karl Alber Verlag, 1965). Bruaire works from the premise that Hegel's philosophical theology displays two chief trinitarian syllogisms: that of religion in general and that of absolute (i.e. Christian) religion. The first, however, is dependent on the second in the sense that the first "logic" of the Absolute shows what God must be in order to reveal himself, but the second "logic" is itself what produces the content via "revelation." Hence, says Bruaire, "The essence of God is not revealed as it is conceived, but it is conceived as it is revealed" (*Logique*, p. 69). Splett's thesis is that "The Logic as a whole is . . . the presentation of the speculative truth of that which

Christian dogmatics designates as the immanent trinity just as the entire system designates the truth of the economic trinity"
(*Trinitätslehre*, p. 78).

93. This is why the current ferment over the question of the meaning and validity of "God language" is a matter about which fundamental theology will be seriously concerned. Only when the lived "ontic" meaning and the speculative "ontological" implications of such language are clarified and defended can the dogmatic task of theology proceed adequately to articulate both the confessional and apologetic religious significance of all the *other* major sub-doctrines to which I refer. That is why Langdon Gilkey notes that the question of the reality of God "is, of course, the most fundamental of all theological questions . . . all other theological issues are logically secondary to this one" (*Naming the Whirlwind* [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969], p. 10), and Schubert Ogden can say with such dramatic force, "Rightly understood, the problem of God is not one problem among several others; it is the only problem there is" (*The Reality of God*, p. 1).

94. LPR, 1:6 (VPR, 11:7).

95. See LL, 2429 (Enzy., 8:6165).

96. LL, 50 (Enzy., 8:87).

97. WL, 4:57 (GL, 1:69).

98. *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 107.

99. This redemptive ability to "endure" is *in part* made possible by our clarified *cognitive* understanding as to how any concrete and existentially enervating "fact" is believed to be "overreached" by

God's redemptive concern. Traditional Christian linguistic and cultic symbols (*Vorstellungen*) function to clarify this belief and they implicitly contain a cognitive "doctrinal" dimension as expressive of this belief. These symbols, however, have *more* than purely cognitive significance in the religious revelatory experience, where our ability to "endure" is born and nurtured. The "heart" and "feeling" *also* have their rights and needs, and Hegel is quite clear about that (see LPR, 1:132133 [VPR, 11:128]). To experience redemption *personally* is *more* than simply to experience it *cognitively*, but by the same token, it is also never redemptive *without* the conceptual dimension being at least implicitly present.

Thus, when David Tracy argues that explicitly conceptual language about "God," which for the Christian religion functions "to refer to the objective ground in reality itself for those limit-experiences of a final confidence and trust," and then notes that in *contrast* to Hegel, this conceptual language "does not claim to capture the full existential meaningfulness of the originating language" as "metaphorical, proverbial, common-sense, and symbolic," I think he has misunderstood Hegel's position on this matter (see *Blessed Rage for Order*, pp. 148 and 164 [n. 12]). Hegel's claim that the philosophical *Begriff* has rights over religious representation (*Vorstellung*) refers to its *cognitive* rights over the otherwise *merely* historical or *simply* personal aspects of this representation. Religious *Vorstellung* is *essentially* rational, to be sure, but it is also something existentially more than *simply* rational, and this "more" has rights and significance which involve other aspects of man's aesthetic, linguistic, and "fictional" needs

in his cultural existence. If this is true, then Tracy's own broader correlative "revisionist" project as pursued in his excellent book could find no more enthusiastic supporter than Hegel himself!

100. VPR, 12:247 (LPR, 3:33).
101. HPM, 303 (Enzy., 10:459).
102. LPR, 1:43 (VPR, 11:44); italics his.
103. PR, 12 (Recht, 36).
104. Phän., 383 (Phen., 558); italics his.
105. LPR, 1:33 (VPR, 11:34).
106. LPH, 17 (VPG, 44).
107. LHP, 1:14 (VGP, 13:26).
108. LPR, 1:33 (VPR, 11:34).
109. The following passage is a classic expression of the ontologically dialectical and incarnational relation between God and man whereby the "objective" Divine Spirit and the "subjective" human spirit are inwardly linked in the *human* conceptual process of finally arriving at "truth."

There is only one Spirit, the universal divine Spirit. Not that it is merely everywhere; it is not to be conceived as a community of properties, as an external Allness [present] only in many or all individual things, which are essentially singular, but as that which permeates [das Durchdringende], as the unity of its own self and of a semblance of its other, as of the subjective, particular. As universal it is object to itself, and so, as determined [it is] a particular, this individual: however, as universal it overreaches

[übergreifen] its other so that its other and it itself are constituted one . . . [This seems to be a "two" but] the Spirit is the unity of the perceived and the perceiving. The divine Spirit which is perceived is the objective; the subjective spirit is the active, but the objective Spirit is itself this activity: the active subjective spirit is that which perceives the divine Spirit and insofar as it perceives it is the divine Spirit itself . . . the divine Spirit lives in its [human] community and is present therein (VGP, 13:88 [LHP, 1:7273]).

In the *Encyclopaedia* the same point is made with a bit more economy: "God is God only so far as he knows himself: his self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge *of* God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge *in* God" (HPM, 298 [Enzy., 10:454]; italics his).

110. VPR, 12:320321 (LPR, 3:113).

111. LL, 10 (Enzy., 8:47).

112. Thomas Munson agrees that Hegel quite well knew that "any [philosophical] insight or viewpoint rests finally upon a choice," and that for Hegel

. . . thought is, for lack of a more precise word, intuitive or enthusiastic. Our elaborate constructions, with all their paraphernalia of objectivity, are radicated in an insight, in a moment of what Hegel has named *Begeistung* (*Begeisterung*), for which we have no better justification than the question: Does this way of looking at the world make things more intelligible? ("Hegel as Philosopher of Religion," p. 15).

Iwan Iljin makes essentially the same point, even if in a bit more dramatic and controversial manner, and with greater emphasis than Munson on power of the *object* of thought to "grasp" the knower in the intuitive moment.

Hegel, in terms of his *philosophical method*, was not a dialectician, but an *intuitivist*; or, better still, Hegel is and remains an *intuitive-thinking clairvoyant* (Hellseher). . . . Hegel did not at all "seek to find contradictions in the concepts," and did not at all "take it upon himself to resolve these contradictions for the future"; it would be false to maintain his thinking was "first analytic" and "then synthetic." . . . His subjective experience is either a *thinking beholding* or a *beholding thinking*. The dialectic is not *his* subjective method of knowing or "method," but *the method* (Greek "methodus") or the *stepping forth of the object itself* (*Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre* [Bern: A. Francke, 1946], p. 126. Italics his; my translation).

113. LPR, 1:1 (VPR, 11:1).

114. LPR, 1:3548 (VPR, 11:3648).

115. These criteria were outlined in the previously mentioned course on Systematic Theology offered at the University of Chicago Divinity School in the Fall Quarter, 1970.

116. In Chapters 2 and 3 above I tried to show the way in which Hegel sought to provide rationally "public" warrants for a positive answer to just these three questions. Chapter 2 centrally addresses the issues of the first two questions, and Chapter 3 the third.

117. See LHP, 1:73 (VGP, 13:89).

118. *Studies in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1890), p. 25.

119. See, e.g., Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, pp. 44 and 53.

120. See, e.g., Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, pp. 274275.

121. Tillich's summary of the fundamental and continuing *philosophical* significance of the LPR in relation to the larger system is worth quoting in this connection.

The conceptualization of the religious contents (of myths and symbols) is the highest aim of philosophy. . . . So Hegel . . . believed that the philosophical concepts were universally born out of the mythological symbols of religion. In a real sense his own philosophy is philosophy of religion; but in a narrower sense philosophy of religion, connected with the church tradition, symbols and myths, has a special place in his system. In this way he unites the critical mind of philosophy with the intuitive symbolizing mind of religion by having philosophy provide the conceptual form for the symbols of religion (*Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, p. 128).

122. LPR, 1:1 (VPR,, 11:1).

123. LPR, 1:36 (VPR, 11:37).

Conclusion

1. Bernard Bosanquet, "Prefatory Essay," *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1886), p. xvii
2. Joseph Möller, review of Jörg Splett's *Die Trinitätslehre G. W. F. Hegels* in *Hegel Studien*, Band 4 (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1967), p. 267; my translation. Möller suggests in this review that given Splett's excellent articulation of the relation

between Hegel's onto-logic and Christian trinitarian doctrine, "The theological-philosophical connection between the doctrine of God as trinitarian doctrine, Christology and theological anthropology should be further clarified" (p. 269). This essay is an attempt to try to do just this.

3. *Christ in Context*, p. 47.
4. Christologies and Cultures, p. 1.
5. Bln. Schrift., 1920.
6. This is Walter Kaufmann's excellent translation from the "Preface" to the *Phenomenology* in *Hege: Texts and Commentary*, pp. 14-16. See Phän., p. 14 and Phen., p. 73.
7. From Kroner's Introduction to T. M. Knox's translation of ETW, p. 21.
8. For two excellent recent discussions of the significance of Hegel's continuing political concerns as expressed in the development of his system, see G. A. Kelley, *Idealism, Politics and History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969) and Franz Gabriel Nauen, *Revolution, Idealism and Human Freedom* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971). One must add, however, that Hegel's concerns were never *merely* political; rather, he was interested in politics as it is the necessary cultural expression of a *deeper* spiritual or religious frame of reference which lies beyond it. This is the point excellently made by Reinhart Mauer against all Marxist preoccupations with a Hegel "abstracted" from his religious convictions and interests as a Christian. See his *Hegel und das*

Ende der Geschichte, especially pp. 118. See also Harris, pp. xv-xxxii and 409477.

9. See William Shepherd's discussion of just this issue in "Hegel as Theologian," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (October 1968): 584589.

10. See Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1947), p. 102, for this judgment one with which I severely disagree for reasons earlier mentioned.

11. *Christ in Context*, p. 48.

12. Ibid., pp. 4951; italics his.

13. Ibid., 48. The "certain independence" from Jesus to which I understand TeSelle to refer involves the fact that for Hegel the inner reconciliation between God and man which is explicitly *known* in the Christian community is also at work implicitly everywhere in human cultural history. Hegel's christology is strongly "inclusivist" rather than "exclusivist" in the way it understands the revelatory significance of the Christ event. In Tracy's terms, "What that special occasion . . . manifests is the disclosure that the only God present to all humanity at every time and place . . . is present explicitly, actually, decisively, as my God in my response to this Jesus as the Christ" (*Blessed Rage for Order*, pp. 206207). With this Hegel would clearly agree. For a similar point of view see also Schubert Ogden, *Christ Without Myth* (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 146164.

14. *Christ in Context*, pp. 114115; italics his.

15. H, 21 (VPG, 49). Hegel's own career as an academician was ruptured by the Napoleonic invasion of Prussia in 1807. The University of Jena was closed and Hegel found himself, in order to

survive financially, having to take the job of editor of a small-town newspaper, the *Bamberger Zeitung*, for more than a year

following. From there he went to Nürnberg to serve as rector of the Gymnasium for almost eight years (18081816). Out of these events a deep despair about Germany's future overcame Hegel for a time. However "triumphalist" he may have later sounded about Germany's unique role in the history of Spirit, these experiences demonstrate he was no "knee-jerk" romantic optimist who arrived at his conclusions in naïve detachment from the "real" world.

16. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, pp. 237 and 351353. I do not wish to fall prey to trying to psychoanalyze Hegel's "inner" experience here. I am rather suggesting that the transition from early doubt about the continuing significance of Christianity as a possible basis for a true *Volksreligion* in Germany, to a later speculative confidence that it could do so, can be understood as an essentially "religious" experience. The fact that the transition happened is clear enough. If one grants that all speculative systems are, in the end, results of some moment of imaginative inspiration whereby one is aware one has not only found, but also been found by, the truth of things, then it is possible to call this a "religious" experience because the concept of "revelation" as a "gift" is one aspect of such experience. In Ricoeur's terms, "the symbol gives; but what it gives is occasion for thought, something to think about," and so I feel justified in assuming that the fundamental "insight" of his speculative system as *developed* is his mature thought was, in the sense described, an insight where the revelational significance of traditional christological symbols was "given" to him in a new way "for thought." That is what, religiously speaking, would account for his almost triumphalist transition to certainty that Christianity was the "absolute religion"

in which everything finally is "adequate" to a speculative knowledge of the Divine Idea. Everything in his actual *use* of these symbols indicates this was the case.

17. LPH, 457 (VPG, 569); italics his.

18. See LHP, 1:7374 (VGP, 13:8990).

19. VPG, 523 (LPH, 416).

20. LHP, 1:74 (VGP, 13:90).

21. Perhaps no one has given a more trenchant and convincing analysis of the religiously problematic secular "Geist" of our present era than has Langdon Gilkey in *Naming the Whirlwind*. See especially Part I, chs. 1-3 and 6.

22. No one has better put his finger on the crucial significance of this issue than has Van Harvey in *The Historian and the Believer*. See especially chs. 14 and 7. And of course, no one has been more helpful in suggesting new insights for the possible resolution of the over-all hermeneutic impasse of modern critical thought, especially with respect to its peculiarly religious dimensions as related to the broader philosophical issues, than has Paul Ricoeur. In addition to the *Symbolism of Evil*, see also *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. by Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

23. By "characteristically" I mean the way in which this issue is discussed in the mature system of Hegel. This is perhaps the most striking difference between Hegel's discussions of Jesus in the *Jugendschriften* and his later references to him in the mature system. In those earlier essays he *did* say a good deal about Jesus' inner thoughts and peculiarly personal soul-struggles; in the later

system it was consistently the character of his preaching and the symbolic or par-

adigmatic character of the pattern of his most characteristic life responses which was to the foreand especially as these tell *us* something about our *own* possibilities.

Thus, he can say, "Christ became a perfect [*vollkommenen*, complete] man, endured the fate of all men, death. He suffered, sacrificed himself, negated his naturalness and thereby elevated himself above it." It is important to note that Hegel goes on to say that the "pain" in renouncing his "naturalness" is something *also* "which is to come to pass *in the subject*," in *us* (VGP, 15:89 [LHP, 3:5]). His "completeness" or "perfection" was characterized as an attitude toward death which was also constantly expressed in his call to "renounce the world" of *merely* natural, finite existence and to trust in God. Nothing about the possibility or actuality of that attitude in him is impossible for us, and it is *that* which has decisive revelatory and paradigmatic significance in *our* present.

24. *Christ in Context*, p. 51. This statement of TeSelle, I think, needs some very important qualifications when it is meant to cover the views of Schleiermacher. Arguing backwards from the *fact* of present redemption to its necessary "ideal" fulfillment in the consciousness of Jesus as the only adequate *cause*, Schleiermacher claims an "absolutely powerful God-consciousness" in Jesus (*The Christian Faith*, 2:387) whereby the "erfect indwelling of the Supreme Being [is] His peculiar being and His inmost self" (2:388). Not only does he suggest that Jesus was "sinless" as "set free from every prejudicial influence of natural descent" (2:389), but he insists there was not even the "inward possibility of sinning" (2:414). Hence, though this truth is not one derivable from

historical *study* about the "real" Jesus, it is derivable from historical *inference* based on the present Christian consciousness of redemption. And so this argument *does* then assay to make assertions about the "inmost self" of Jesus, the "'real' Jesus as he was in himself." Nonetheless, TeSelle's over-all argument remains valid, for the major emphasis in Schleiermacher's christology remains the present archetypal significance of Jesus "for me"; it is there his christological argument begins, and not with the Jesus of history.

25. Schubert Ogden, "The Point of Christology," p. 379. I obviously do not mean to imply Ogden is a modern day "Hegelian," only that from this one perspective they share a common emphasis.

26. Ibid.

27. This sort of emphasis is what has caused most modern interpreters to suggest that Hegel has "rationalized," "logicized," or "domesticated" evil in his system, and thereby robbed it of its radically disruptive and deformative existential character (cf., for example, Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 115). That is what lies behind Kierkegaard's famous cynical observation that Hegel built a splendid speculative "castle" of ideas, but lived in a "shack" of reality beside it where anxiety, guilt and evil as ever *present* are not one whit existentially different for all his trouble. (It should be noted, interestingly enough, that the young Hegel himself uses a similar analogy about a "palace" of a merely abstract "divine knowledge" which is only "copied" second hand, in contrast to a deeper and concrete first-hand religious knowledge by which a man ought to "build his own little house, a house which he can call his own" [See HTJ, pp. 1718]).

But such a criticism of Hegel seems to me not quite fair. Hegel's problem as a philosopher was conceptual and systematic, and the primary issue for him in this context was not whether evil was in fact *experienced* as radically disruptive to the human spirit, but rather, given that painfully obvious fact, what one could possibly have to say about its *meaning*, its *speculative* and *religious* significance, and even perhaps its *purpose* as endured in *hope*. In some ways Hegel's recognition of the "power of the negative" as the disciplining instrument of God's *larger* reconciling and redemptive purposes implies no more and no less than Paul's statement in Romans 8:28 "all things *work together* for good," which, in turn, has for its larger interpretation the background of Romans 11:3336. There Paul insists that "all things" are to be seen as having their meaning secured in the purposes of God himself: "For of him, and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever."

In this context Hegel probably could well mount a *tu quoque* argument against all theologians who, if they be theists, have the same conceptual problem and eventually must come down on the same side of the issue as he does. Christian theism has never been able to insist on anything less than that evil, personally and corporately real though it surely is, is not *ultimately* disclosive of what constitutes the character of the "last power," of what is *ultimately* real. What impressed Hegel was not only the continuing horrors of Good Friday in every human life, but also the creative possibilities of Resurrection *beyond* them which occur over and over again. Evil therefore is seen in its issue as being ultimately "overreached" by the benevolent purposes of

God. Historically speaking, Hegel quite clearly saw that empires rise *and* fall, but for his part he was more interested in what it was in the human spirit that enabled it to endure such calamitous falls and then again and again to rise above them. He saw that it was in fact just such calamities that seem to *provoke* the rise of new and richer possibilities in the historical actualization of the human spirit. Hegel and the Christian religion, of course, may be wrong about this way of "seeing" the "meaning" of evil, but Hegel believed it was quite clear that *if* one is *truly* Christian, one "must" see it this way, for the Christian religion is eminently one of hope *hope in God for man throughout history in spite of evil.*

28. The Point of Christology," p. 390. The specific thinkers he here has in mind which represent this "typical" point of view are John A. T. Robinson (*The Human Face of God* [London: SCM Press, 1973]) and Norman Pittenger ("The Incarnation in Process Theology," *Review and Expositor* 71 [Winter 1974]: 4357).

29. By "logical coherence" I refer to the need for rigorous systematic adequacy; by "width of intelligibility" I refer to the need for adequacy in terms of the best-tested results of our accumulated cultural knowledge; and by "adequacy to lived experience" I refer to the need for such a discourse to be able to illumine and unify our everyday life from the standpoint of our distinctively *human* existential concerns. See Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind*, pp. 459464, for further discussion of these criteria.

30. See Schubert Ogden's discussion of this issue, "What is Theology?" *Journal of Religion* 52 (January 1972): 3638.

31. *The Historian and the Believer*, p. 288.
32. Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought*, trans. Brian Cozens (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 280.
33. See, by contrast, Tracy's very helpful comments on this issue, pp. 216218 and 231232 [n. 73]. Cf. also Küng, pp. 592599, for a typical criticism of Hegel's christology as one proceeding too much "from above," as too speculatively "high."
34. *Protestant Thought*, p. 305.
35. *Christologies and Cultures*, p. 158.

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